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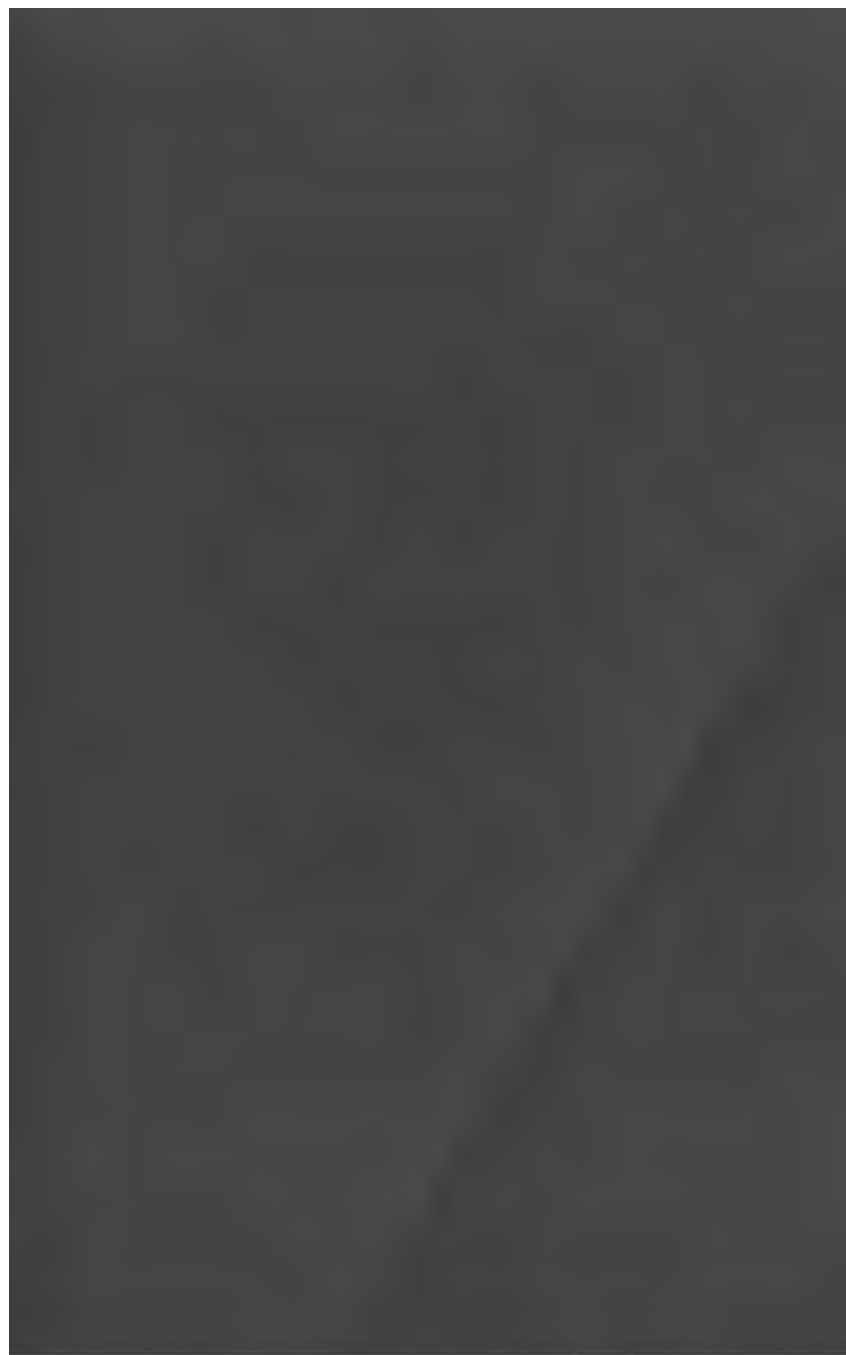


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(Stanley)

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*THE UNITY OF
EVANGELICAL AND APOSTOLICAL TEACHING.*

SERMONS

PREACHED MOSTLY IN

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

BY ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY, D.D.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD:
CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH, AND LATE CANON OF CANTERBURY.

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1859

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P R E F A C E.

THE Two courses of Sermons which follow were (with one exception) preached in succeeding years to the ordinary congregation assembled in Canterbury Cathedral, and may be considered as the farewell of one who will long remember his stay amongst them with grateful affection. Some allusions to the peculiar circumstances of the place (such as the occasional addresses to the Chapter-School) will explain themselves; others will be intelligible to those concerned, and need no further notice here.

But it may be as well briefly to state the general purpose which I had in view in these discourses, and which has determined me to select them for publication.

I. The Teaching of the Apostles, and, still more, the Teaching of our Lord, is a subject to

which, from time to time, the attention of the Church has been especially directed. It was the object of a well-known treatise¹, published in the early part of this century, to point out the importance of considering the original Teaching of the Apostolical Epistles as an example of the best mode of imparting Apostolical Truth. It has been my humble endeavour to apply the same principle to the Gospels, and to indicate in a simple form how the Teaching delineated by the Evangelists may guide us in communicating Evangelical Truth.

This brief and, from the nature of the case, very general outline of the Gospel doctrine, I have combined with an attempt to draw out those portions of the Apostolical doctrine which most fully exhibit the harmony between the two. Obvious as this harmony is, it has been so often denied or disparaged by opposite sections of the Church or world, that its reassertion and confirmation cannot be regarded as a superfluous task. I have elsewhere, with the same view, brought together the chief allusions in

¹ Archbishop Sumner's "Apostolical Preaching."

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S. Paul's Epistles to the facts of the Gospel History. These discourses may be considered as continuing (in a less systematic form) the same argument from the identity of teaching in these two portions of the New Testament.

II. The nature of the subject of itself compelled me to dwell not so much on the speculative or historical as on the moral and practical truths which unquestionably constitute the chief end and purpose of the teaching both of our Lord and of the Apostles. This limitation seemed to me not without its use at the present time.

In a work which lately excited much attention in France, the author thus addresses his countrymen: "Pour ma part, je le dis
" sans détour, j'ai horreur de l'orthodoxie qui
" ne tient aucun compte de la justice et de la
" vérité, de l'humanité et de l'honneur; et je
" ne me lasse pas de répéter ces fortes et ré-
" centes paroles de l'Évêque de la Rochelle:
" 'Ne serait-ce pas bonne chose que de faire
" à plusieurs catholiques un cours sur les
" vertus de l'ordre naturel, sur le respect dû

“ au prochain, sur la loyauté même envers
“ ses adversaires, sur l'esprit de l'équité et
“ de la charité? ” Les vertus de l'ordre naturel
“ sont des vertus essentielles, dont l'Eglise
“ elle-même ne dispense pas.”¹

The Church of France is not the only religious community to which this remark applies. Every age of the Church, and every part of Christendom, in a greater or less degree, is in need of such instruction. But there is a further and higher need than that indicated by the French statesman. We need to be reminded not so much of the abstract claim which these obvious duties have upon us, as of the fact that they are of the very essence, not of natural, but of Evangelical Religion; that they are the proper sphere not of heretical, but of orthodox Theology. It has been my object to bring together what the popular language of modern times has often unhappily divorced, and to show that such teaching belongs to the first principles of Gospel-doctrine. If in this attempt I may seem often to have used familiar words in a new sense, I would ask my readers to re-

¹ Montalembert, “ Débat sur l'Inde,” p. 13.

member, that such a sense is their undoubted, primitive, original, signification. No research or philosophy has been attempted. It is sufficient for my purpose to know that the language and the arguments which I have employed are strictly Scriptural.

III. In selecting subjects from so wide a circle as the Evangelical and Apostolical Teaching, I have been, in some measure, guided by the desire to bring out prominently points which have often been unduly kept in the background, and yet which, on the other hand, are essential to any complete understanding, or complete vindication, of the Gospel system. Many of the charges brought against it are really caused by the fact that these, its most original features, are either concealed or forgotten. But it is my hope that neither in the subject of these Sermons nor in the mode of treating it, will there be found anything inconsistent with the comprehensive spirit which is the cherished inheritance of the Church of England. A narrow or exclusive scheme of doctrine, incongruous everywhere within the pale of the National

Church, would have been specially out of place in those of its institutions which peculiarly represent its ancient, universal, and complex character.

It is common in the present day to object to this or that kind of teaching as "indefinite," or as "defective." No faithful expounder of the vastness and simplicity of Scriptural Doctrine can altogether escape the first charge; no preacher who endeavours "rightly to divide the word of truth" can altogether escape the second. But the topics which are here discussed (if measured by the standard of the Bible and the Prayer-Book) will be found as definite and as complete as any single subject that could be selected; and probably no one will doubt that the parts of Scripture on which I have here especially dwelt, are those which set forth the doctrines of Christianity in the most permanent, and therefore the most convincing form.

To these Sermons I have appended a few occasional addresses, which may have some

interest from the places where they were preached; and the facilities which my late position gave me for foreign travel naturally connect them with this volume.

The concluding Sermon is an endeavour to suggest the general opportunities which fall to the lot of a Cathedral-body such as that to which I had the honour to belong; the peculiar means of usefulness and peculiar capabilities of improvement which such institutions afford; and the great loss which would be entailed on the Church by their destruction.

Christ Church, Oxford,
March 1, 1859.

ERRATA.

- Page 97, line 1, *for* "shall" *read* "should."
" 98, " 5, 2nd paragraph, *omit* "but who."
" 99, " 2, *for* "wrote" *read* "wrote out."
" 190, " 5, *for* "Gal. v. 15," *read* "Gal. vi. 15."
" 191, " 3, *for* "availeth," *read* "is."

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THE UNITY
OF
EVANGELICAL AND APOSTOLICAL TEACHING.

SERMON I.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

PREACHED ON ADVENT SUNDAY (S. ANDREW'S DAY), 1856.

ROM. x. 15.

*How beautiful are the feet of them that preach
the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings
of good things!*

WHAT is meant by the "Gospel"—the "glad tidings of good things?" It is a word we often use. What is its true, universal, Christian signification? No doubt, like all words of ancient and sacred origin, it has many meanings. To a man sunk in the depth of

despair, nothing is more truly a "Gospel" or "glad tidings," than the announcement of God's infinite mercy in Jesus Christ. To a man striving earnestly to mend his life, nothing is so true a Gospel of Peace as the announcement of God's ever ready help. To the humble or simple man, doing his duty in that state of life to which God has called him, walking according to the law which God has written in his heart, the best Gospel (which S. Paul, in one place, especially calls *his*¹ Gospel,) is that God with "a righteous judgment" will faithfully "render to every man according to his deeds." To the Jews, at the time of Christ's coming, that to which they most eagerly looked as the glad tidings of good things was the announcement that there was born one of the house of David who would restore the kingdom to Israel. To the Gentiles (and this again S. Paul calls his own Gospel²), the glad tidings consisted in the announcement that "there was no difference between Jew and Greek," that the Gentiles are henceforth "fellow-citizens with the" ancient "saints."

Every one of these answers is true to a

¹ Rom. ii. 5—16. ² Eph. iii. 6, 7. Rom. x. 12—15.

certain extent. But we see at once that they are special answers to special classes. Not one of them can be said to be the Gospel of the whole world. What, then, is that Gospel, in a sense which embraces all of us? What are the glad tidings of good things which touch all alike?

“The word is very nigh to us—even in our mouths and in our hearts.” What portion of Scripture is it that all Christians from the earliest times have called by the name of “the Gospel?” It is “the Gospel according to S. Matthew,” “the Gospel according to S. Mark,” “the Gospel according to S. Luke,” “the Gospel according to S. John.” What those four narratives contain—what that one history, told four times over, contains—is, as its name implies, “the Gospel” in the highest, truest, and most universal sense. To preach, teach, study, practise what those four books contain, is to preach, teach, study, practise the Gospel, though we knew of nothing besides. Other teaching and preaching may be most true, most useful in its way, may be truly apostolical, or truly philosophical, may be truly Protestant or truly Catholic; but

this alone, or what most nearly approaches to this, is the teaching, or practice, which is in the best and highest sense, Evangelical, — is in the full, original, scriptural sense, the Gospel of Jesus Christ Himself. From this most precious portion of Scripture, is derived the light of all the rest. The Gospels contain the sun in his rising; the Old Testament is but the twilight of the dawn. The Gospels contain the sun in his setting; all that follows is but in comparison as the reflected light in moon or stars to guide us on our way through the darkness of the night. They stand at the beginning of the new dispensation; inasmuch as the events which they describe took place at the first outset of the Christian history; but they stand also at its end; for they were not completed till long after the close of the writings of S. Paul. They are the latest as well as the earliest expression of the whole mind of the Apostolical church. They follow, as well as precede, the Epistles. Of the four Evangelists, if of any human being, we must say: “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, that bring glad tidings of good things!”

What, then, are the tidings they bring? They bring first and chiefly the glad tidings that Jesus Christ has come — His character, His life, His work; what He was, what He is, what He did. On this most important part of the Evangelical message, I endeavoured this time last year to bring before you such thoughts as were from week to week suggested by the services of the season. But there is another part of the message — a Gospel as it were within a Gospel — the Gospel of which our Lord Jesus Christ was not only the subject, but the Preacher; the Gospel contained not only in the works, but in the words of Christ. He was himself (so to speak) the first and greatest of the Evangelists. Again and again we are told in language specially appropriate to this season — “Jesus came . . . preaching the GOSPEL of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye and believe the GOSPEL.”¹ — “And when he had opened the book of the prophet Esaias, he found the place where it was written, The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach

¹ Mark i. 14.

the GOSPEL to the poor.”¹— And Jesus went about preaching the GOSPEL of the kingdom . . . and there followed him great multitudes of people, — and seeing the multitudes He went up into a mountain, and when He was set His disciples came unto Him, and He opened His mouth and taught them”²— taught them, in that great discourse which contains the blessings, the laws, the hopes, the duties of the GOSPEL of the kingdom. Of Him, so teaching, so preaching, it was true in the most literal and expressive manner — “ How beautiful on the mountains were the feet of Him that preached the Gospel of Peace, that brought glad tidings of good things ! ”

Let me then, on the ensuing Sundays, bring before you some of the main characteristics of the teaching of our Lord : and, in order that we may the better be able to fix our attention on this, let us dwell at the outset on two or three of the points which bring before us its great importance.

I. First, let us observe that His words, His discourses, as preserved to us in the Gospels, are in a special sense the means of retaining

¹ Luke iv. 17, 18.

² Matt. iv. 23—v. 1.

our consciousness, our belief of His presence. Doubtless had we lived at the time, His every act and deed would have had a like effect. His very look would have been a Gospel in itself, as when it melted the heart of Peter. The very sound of His feet upon the grass of the mountain-tops would have brought to our ears glad tidings of good things. But His words, His sayings, have a yet greater interest. We cannot *see* Him now, but we can still *hear* Him. His deeds are with the past, His countenance we know only by imagination; but His words are still with us;—they are the very bequest which He himself left us, to fill up the void of His absence. “What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?” so He spoke to His perplexed and sorrowing followers—“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: The words that I speak unto you, they are SPIRIT, and they are LIFE.”¹—In them (with reverence be it spoken) He is still present; they are unchanged; in them we can still hold the closest communion with Him, in spirit and in truth. Present

¹ John vi. 62, 63.

doubtless He is in many ways besides ; present in the dispensations of Providence ; present in the hearts of His people ; present in His sacred ordinances ; present “ in the least of these His brethren.” God forbid that we should limit, or define, or deny the modes or the means in which that Presence can be found by any single believing spirit. Our sense of Him, our faith in Him, needs, alas ! *all* the helps, inward and outward, that can be had. But let us thankfully acknowledge that in His teaching, in His sayings, in His Gospel, as preached by Himself, is at least one mode of entering into His sacred Presence,—one mode of overleaping the nineteen centuries which separate us from the time of His first coming,—one mode of preparing ourselves for that second coming which year by year is drawing near to all of us. “ His sheep,” he tells us, “ *hear His voice.*”¹ Let us hear it now ; it sounds in our ears still ; we can accustom ourselves to its tones, its infinite variety of tones, cheerful or serious, consoling or warning,—and then, when He comes as a shepherd to divide His flock, He shall know us, and we shall follow Him.

¹ John x. 3.

II. Secondly, this attitude of listeners — of scholars — of looking up to Him not only as our Example, our Saviour, our Lord, but as our Instructor, our Evangelist, is the very relation in which those were who first followed Him on earth. What was the name by which He was most often, most endearingly, called by those who sate at His feet, who went after Him by sea and land, who clung to Him as their hope in this life and the next? It was “Master,” “Rabbi,” “Rabboni,” “Teacher,” “My Teacher,” “The Master,” “The Teacher.”¹ And what was the name by which His followers were called — not only when He was with them, but even after He was removed from them,—as if even more forcibly to bring before us the indisputable relation in which *we* stand towards Him still? It was “Disciples:” not His subjects, not His slaves, not even His friends, though all these we are or ought to be; but “His disciples,” “His scholars,” “His pupils,” “His school-children.” How affect-

¹ In S. Luke (*ἐπιστάτης*) “Master” occurs six times. In S. John, S. Mark, and S. Matthew, “Rabbi,” or “Rabboni,” occurs eleven times. In the four Gospels, “Teacher” (*διδάσκαλος*) occurs forty-four times.

ing, how solemn are the lessons which this conveys to us all ! To those of us who are concerned in teaching, how cheering, how ennobling, yet how humbling, is the thought that they are in the same profession, I might almost say, as that which He thus honoured ! What an example, even in detail, if we so regard it, does His life then become ! What a warning, what an encouragement to us, to bring out of our treasure-house things new and old,—to catch the attention by parable and story, by kindness and forethought, by sternness and by gentleness ! What an inducement to bear, as He did, with the ingratitude of Judas, with the fickleness of Peter, with the waywardness of the sons of Zebedee, with the dulness of Philip, with the doubts and difficulties of Thomas ! And to those who are taught, who are scholars, who are learners, who are disciples, you, my younger hearers, what an example to you, if you remember that your state of life is that which was the training of the Apostles and first Christians before you ! They, like you, were learners, — they sate round their Teacher, — they gathered in,

by little and little, what He had to tell them ; they had, as you have, to take much on trust, to listen, to question, to wait and watch for opportunities, to profit by what they had learned, years after they and their Master had been parted asunder. And for all of us, it is true, even to the letter, that “we are all disciples, and one is our Master, even Christ.”¹ The youngest of us need not be afraid to study His words — to carry away from this place text after text of our Lord’s sayings, easy to be understood, easy to be remembered, most useful, most pleasant to be used. The oldest of us need not be ashamed to confess that in those words they have still much to learn : that the wisdom of our Lord’s sayings is not less but more apparent as time rolls on, as trouble increases, as the failure of earthly things proves to us more and more “the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hid in Him.”²

III. And this brings me once more to the point from which I began. Remember that from first to last His preaching is “the

¹ Matt. xxiii. 8.

² Col. ii. 2, 3.

Gospel of Peace," His feet bring "the glad tidings of good things." In different degrees it may be, and to one more than to another, — but to all there is a joy, a cheerfulness, a gladness, even in His shortest sayings. That the kingdom of heaven was come at last, that His own coming was the pledge of its victory, — this pervades all that He said, as well as all that He did. Look at His discourses in this light, and they will assume a new, but a most consoling aspect. Not only the comfortable words, "Come unto me and I will give you rest," but the words, "Enter ye in at the strait gate," — not only the words, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," but the words, "Be ye perfect, even as my Father is perfect," — are parts of the same Gospel of Peace. The keen frost which braces our nerves, and clears our atmosphere, is as necessary, and seasonable, and invigorating, as the gentle airs of spring, as the genial warmth of summer, as the golden fall of autumn. All are alike to be found in His discourses; all are alike to be cherished.

It is a Gospel of Peace to find a friend who, even whilst he rebukes us, shows that he

enters into our thoughts, reads our wants, feels for our weaknesses. Such is the effect of reading the words of Him who knew what was in man, who was tempted like as we are, who lays his finger on each infirmity of our suffering souls. It is glad tidings of great joy to be told that goodness, patience, justice, purity, are not idle dreams,— that they are within our reach, that not in any one country or place, but everywhere, God may be served and man may be loved. Such is the effect of reading the words of Him who went about proclaiming that “the time was fulfilled,”— that “the kingdom of God was come,”— “repent and believe the Gospel.” It is the Gospel of Peace to bear witness that there is something higher for our guidance than worldly maxims, and heathen morality, and Jewish forms, and excited feelings. Such is the witness borne by the calm, simple, comprehensive words of Him who is the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Light of the world.

In Him are fulfilled in their highest sense the words of the Prophet as first written — “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that pub-

lisheth peace,—that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.”¹ *Thy God reigneth.* This is the highest happiness to which any of us can look backward or forward. That God does reign in Heaven, that He guides all the joys, sorrows, troubles, difficulties of this world, to a good issue at last — this is our comfort always. That He did reign in earth, and that His kingdom was established among men, in the person of Jesus Christ His Son, in justice, mercy, and truth,—was the glad tidings announced in a special sense by Christ Himself and His Apostles. That through His Spirit He may continue more and more to reign in our own hearts,—that His grace may prevail over all ignorance, hardness of heart, contempt of His word and commandments,—that His kingdom may come, and His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven,—this is the highest Gospel privilege ; this is the highest Christian hope ; this was the constant theme of the words, no less than of the works, of Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹ Isa. lii. 7.

SERMON II.

THE WORDS OF CHRIST.

PREACHED ON THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT, 1856.

—♦—
LUKE XXI. 33.

*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my
words shall not pass away.*

IN a few words is here given a description of one main characteristic of our Lord's teaching, its universal and eternal endurance. Let us endeavour to trace what is involved in this description. It might have been so ordered that Christ's words should have lasted for ever, and yet that the causes of their continuance should not have been known to us. But neither here nor elsewhere is this the law of God's Providence. He not only grants His gifts to mankind, but He graciously permits us to see and to profit by their adap-

tation to the end for which they were designed. In thus considering the words of Christ, we shall learn several important truths.

I. Whatever explains this peculiarity of His teaching, will in some degree apply to the teaching of the Scriptures generally. They too are the Word of God, though not in the same absolute and divine sense as that in which He was the WORD of God. They are inspired throughout by the Spirit of God, although not in the same entire and boundless sense as He was, to whom "the Spirit was given without measure."¹ Other books, almost of necessity, pass away with their own generation, — works of amusement, works of edification, how few there are which live from one age to another! They serve their turn, they are laid by, and are succeeded by others, which are laid by in like manner. But the Bible still lives on. Now, by studying the cause why His words do not pass away, we shall see why it is that the words of other Scriptures do not pass away; we shall arrive at one point at least which may explain to us what is meant

¹ John iii. 34.

by "Inspiration." And we may also learn something for ourselves. He, as I said last Sunday, was the type and highest example of all teachers. By studying the causes, humanly speaking, of the lasting effect of His words, we may learn, perhaps, how to seek greater force and greater effect for our own words. We all have, if not to teach, yet to speak, and talk, and learn. Thousands, no doubt, and tens of thousands, of our words will pass away and be never heard of again. Yet it is not too much for the humblest amongst us to hope that we may say some one thing at least which may do good,—which may last beyond the present hour — which may even be remembered when we are dead and gone.

II. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but Christ's words have not passed away, and shall not pass away." They are still read; they are still revered; they will be read and revered hundreds of years hence, as they are now; —let us trust, more than they are now, more than they ever have been. What are the causes of this undoubted fact? — what are the causes of this hope that is in

us? Let us humbly and devoutly ask this question, remembering whose words they are of which we speak — words which it seems an almost equal irreverence to praise or to censure — words, however, which it is our duty and privilege to understand, to examine, and to explain.

(1.) Suffer me to begin with the most simple, homely peculiarity of our Saviour's teaching, — true of the Scriptures generally, but especially true of His words, — namely, their brevity. Perhaps we hardly enough consider either the fact or its great importance. Remember how small a book even the whole Bible is, and remember, further, how small a part of that book is occupied by His words. Compare them with the teaching of other celebrated teachers in our own or former times. One collection alone of the sayings of the Arabian Prophet Mahomet fills no less than thirteen hundred folio pages. All the sayings of Christ are contained in the short compass of the four Gospels; the few that are not there do not occupy two pages at most: the whole Sermon on the Mount — the greatest discourse ever preached, the whole

code of Christian morality, the whole sum of saving doctrine — would not, if read from this place, take more than a quarter of an hour. Consider how greatly this has assisted the preservation, the remembrance, the force of Christ's words. We have not to go far and wide to seek them; they are within our grasp, within our compass, within our sight; — very nigh to us, in our heart, and in our mouth, — easy to read, easy to recollect, easy to repeat. The waters of life are not lost in endless rivers and lakes. They are confined within the definite circle of one small living well, of which all can "come and drink freely, without money, and without price."

(2.) But the well is not only easy to find, but it is deep, and its "waters spring up into everlasting life." You never get to the end of Christ's words. There is something in them always behind. They pass into proverbs — they pass into laws — they pass into doctrines — they pass into consolations; but they never pass away, and, after all the use that is made of them, they are still not exhausted. One reason of this is to be found in their freedom from local, temporary allusions.

Allusions of this kind, no doubt, they do contain. Some light is thrown upon them by the knowledge of the country, and of the manners and customs of the time. But by far the larger part of His teaching is drawn from subjects so familiar, so natural, that they can be equally understood in almost every country. No learning is needed for their illustration — shepherds, sailors, ploughmen, soldiers, fishermen, can understand them as fully as the greatest scholar that ever lived. Another cause is their great variety. Each one of the classes I have just mentioned can find something even in the outward form that will apply to their own particular case — much more in the object and meaning of the different parts. Each man, with his own peculiar temptations, joys, sorrows, may find something that suits himself ; each man, like Nathanael under his fig-tree, may find the Saviour's eye fixed on him alone. We sometimes imagine that by "preaching the Gospel" is meant preaching the same truth over and over again in the same words, to congregations however different from each other, under occasions however different each from each. This was

not the preaching of the Gospel by Him who first preached it ; even in the short compass of the Gospels, every chord of the heart is struck, every infirmity of the conscience and mind is roused and soothed. Heaven and earth may pass away, but as long as a single human soul survives in the depths of eternity, in that human soul Christ's words will live, will find a hearing, will awaken a response.

And this variety is expressed and is secured by a process in itself instructive. Not by one form of teaching only, but by many. By things new and old ; by discourses, such as the Sermon on the Mount ; by stern truth or severe rebuke, as in the argument with the Pharisees and Sadducees ; by pleasant fiction and parable, such as those He spoke on the sea-shore of Gennesareth. Remember this, all that learn and all that teach. Not by one channel only, but by many, is God's truth conveyed : one may have more attraction for one class, one for another ; by some means or other, Christ would have us taught to know His Father's mind, to do His Father's will ; but every one of those ways and means is after His example.

(3.) Consider, again, how the words, as it were, force us away from the mere letter that kills, to the Spirit that gives life and lives for ever. Some of you may have heard Luther's celebrated description of S. Paul's language : "The words of S. Paul are not dead words ; they are living creatures, and have hands and feet." He meant thereby to describe, and did faithfully describe, the extraordinary force and completeness of the words of that great Apostle, each of which seem to have a distinctness and substance of its own. But there is something in our Lord's words higher still : we almost forget that they are words ; they seem but as a transparent light in which the truth is contained. No sect has turned them into watchwords ; they are almost like a soul without a body ; to use His own description, "The words that He speaks to us *are spirit* and *are life*."¹

This peculiarity is connected with another, which the Apostle himself has indicated. It is true of the Scriptures generally that they treat of general principles, not detailed applications. But this is specially true of our

¹ John vi. 63.

Lord's teaching, even in comparison with that of His own Apostles. "Not I, but the Lord,"¹ says S. Paul, when he lays down the universal principle about marriage. "I, not the Lord,"² he says, when he gives the special application and exception. And this is brought about by the very form in which our Lord's teaching is expressed. He Himself speaks of His words as the seeds cast forth by the sower. So they are. They are not mere crumbs of bread thrown down, devoured, and lost, but seeds which sink into the ground and bear fruit. But here also is His own saying true: "Except the seed die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."³ The word, the precept, the letter of this teaching often not only dies, but carries so evidently on its face the mark of death, of impossibility, of contradiction, as to tell us that not in the word itself, but in the meaning, in the life, in the spirit of the word, is the real truth to be found. Like Himself, it "is not here, it is risen."⁴ Take the precepts which tell us to turn the left cheek to him that smites us

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 10.

² 1 Cor. vii. 12.

³ John xii. 24.

⁴ Matt. xxviii. 6.

on the right, or to cut off our right hand when it offends us.”¹ The obedience to the letter is impossible ; it throws us off to something greater, higher, wider than itself. Or take the instances of passages which appear to oppose each other. “He that is not with me is against me ;” “He that is not against us is on our part ;”² “Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s ; render unto God the things that are God’s.”³ These, and many more that might be quoted, are examples of that comprehension of different sides of truth which alone can give to any teaching a permanent and enduring value. Only those teachers, only those Churches which so embrace the various wants of the minds and consciences of various and conflicting characters can hope to render their voices heard beyond the narrow circle of time and space in which their own lot is cast. Such wide expressions of truth, such seeming contradictions, — brought about, doubtless, in great measure by secondary, inferior causes, yet producing the same blessed, evangelical result, — we happily

¹ Matt. v. 30. 39.

² Matt. xii. 30., Mark ix. 40.

³ Matt. xxii. 21.

possess in the mixed forms of our own Church; in this respect, we may humbly say, echoing the various tones of our Master's words, and securing something of the same vitality to the whole counsel of God thus delivered amongst us.

(4.) There is yet another feature of Christ's words, more important than any that I have named, namely, that they are not merely abstract words, but they directly flow from His acts, His character, Himself. Above all qualities needed to give force to a teacher's words, is this correspondence between himself and them. "He only" (says the old proverb) "whose life is lightning can make his words thunder." Most remarkably is this the case with the teaching of our Lord. Not only do His discourses and parables bring before us His mind, His mission, one might almost say His very look and countenance, but nearly every one of them grows out of some special occasion, and is intertwined with the memory of some gracious action. In each turn of expression, not He only, but the whole scene, the whole atmosphere, the whole spirit of the Gospel narrative, seems as it were to live over

again. His words live because He lives ; they continue the same, because He was and is the same ; His immortality, His eternity, is reflected in them ; they are the words of God, because He is "the WORD" of God.

And, further, as they flow from what is eternal, so also they tend to what is eternal. They are not abstract doctrines, nor ceremonial regulations, nor expressions of fleeting devotion ; they all have one grand object, namely, to make us and all mankind more just, more merciful, more pure, more holy. They breathe the spirit of the Father of Spirits ; for they are founded on the laws of everlasting truth and right. "If Justice be done, let Heaven itself fall ;" "Heaven and earth shall pass away," but Justice and Charity never fail ; and till they fail, "the words of Christ," which are their highest expression, "shall not pass away."

III. What general conclusions, let us ask, may we draw from this view of the nature of the words of Christ? First, the mere fact of their long endurance is a standing evidence of the truth of His Divine mission. It is of

itself a reason why, in our times of tribulation and perplexity, we should turn to Him and say, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the WORDS of eternal LIFE."¹ All the institutions which then filled the world and occupied the thoughts of men have passed away; the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages have passed away; whole systems of science, philosophy, and theology, great in their time, have passed away,—but Christ's words have not passed away. They still remain to show us what He was, and what He is, and (may we not say?) what He will be. Yes; even in the literal sense, Heaven and earth shall pass away; all that we see, and feel, and hear shall pass away. But into that unseen state, His words have gone before us; they will yet once more sound in our ears; "the word that He has spoken the same will judge us in the last day."² Secondly, we may, in a humble measure, apply what is said of His words to the words of His faithful followers. When Heaven and earth are passing from our mortal gaze, or from the gaze of those whom we have known and honoured,—when the

¹ John vi. 68.

² John xii. 48.

hand of death is gradually drawing the curtain round us,—what words, what thoughts, are those which survive in that dark hour? The greeting of Christian cheerfulness, the calm thoughtfulness of Christian wisdom, the blessing of the Christian peacemaker, these will sound in our memory long after the eyes are closed, and the lips are sealed. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of Christ, and the Christ-like words of Christ's disciples, shall never pass away in this world or the next. Lastly, let us remember that we, each one of us, must show that we have not heard Christ's words in vain. They are strown far and wide over this land, over this congregation, like the seeds of the sower. There is something for each of us. There is a consolation for the mourners; there is a rebuke to the worldly; there is a hope for the penitent; there is an encouragement for the weak. Take away something of what you have heard to-day,—take away something of what you hear each Sunday. Sunday by Sunday gives you a different word. Receive them all, one by one, treasure them up, and in the end there will be a great store of wisdom,

which will never fail. The seed which produces no fruit is as good as lost,—the word of Christ which does not come out again in some good thought, or word, or work of ours, might as well never have been uttered. Blessed are “they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”¹

¹ Luke viii. 15.

SERMON III.

THE LAW OF CHRIST.

(CHRISTMAS-DAY, 1866.)



PSALM xix. 7, 8.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, and giveth light unto the eyes.

THESE words, from the proper Psalms of this morning's service, may seem, at first sight, to have little connection with Christmas-Day; but they fitly represent one aspect of our Lord's coming which falls in with the discourses you have lately heard, and with the special character under which He appears in the first of the four Gospels, the Gospel according to S. Matthew. He came not only

as our Saviour, but as our Lawgiver ; or rather, as the words of the text well express it, as our Saviour and our Lawgiver both in one. The law of the Lord Jesus Christ is not only "a pure and perfect law," but it "converts the soul ;" the statutes which He has given are not only "right," but they "rejoice the heart." Let us see how this union was effected, and what this law was ; and to that end let us follow the multitudes that gathered round Him from all parts, when they heard that a great Teacher was come, "preaching the Gospel of the kingdom : " let us seat ourselves with them on the level spaces of the broken hill, to hear what were the gracious words with which He broke the silence of ages,—the words in which "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners had spoken to the fathers by the prophets, in these last days spoke unto us by His Son."¹ "When He saw the multitudes," (so we read in the fifth chapter of S. Matthew's Gospel,) "He went up into the mountain, and taught them, saying :—

"Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹ Heb. i. 1.

“Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.

“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake : for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.”

This was the law of the Lord, “pure and undefiled ;” this was “the Gospel of the kingdom ;” this the blessedness and happiness of man ; this the Christmas salutation, which He who knew what was in man, and who spake as never man spake, delivered to the sick and suffering, and poor and afflicted and perplexed, who gathered round Him then—who gather round Him now. Every sentence, every word of that sublime benediction contains the text for a sermon—contains the history of the life

of the saints and of the Church of God—contains a fundamental doctrine of the religion of Christ our Saviour. But on this evening let us consider the whole as they stand together; their immense importance, their searching truth, their everlasting consolation.

I. It needs but few words to explain their importance. Remember when and where and by whom they were spoken,—at the very opening of His ministry,—as describing the characteristics of the Gospel of the kingdom,—as the key-note to the whole discourse which was to follow, that great revelation of Christian truth, which has been truly called the Magna Charta of our holy religion. Whatever else is true in the Bible, or out of the Bible, this is true; whatever else is the Gospel, this is the Gospel: to receive, obey, act on these truths, this only is, in the highest sense of the words, Christian and Evangelical. On the last occasion when the revision of the English Prayer-book was considered, a hundred and sixty years ago, by some of our best divines, there was one proposal made, which, though not carried out in the letter, we may still do

well to bear in mind in its spirit. Thrice a year, on the three great festivals, Easter, Whitsunday, and Christmas-day, they intended that in the place of the Ten Commandments should be read the Eight Blessings or Beatitudes of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It was a just and beautiful thought. As the Ten Commandments on the mountain, where, amidst blackness and tempest, the trumpet spoke exceeding loud, so were the Eight Blessings on the Galilean mountain, where "He opened His mouth" and spoke those strong, yet gentle words, which are at once the rule and the hope of the Christian life — the law and the Gospel in one — "the law which was given by Moses," fulfilled in "the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ."¹

II. And now what was the precise meaning of the doctrines thus put forth, with a sanction so high, on an occasion so solemn? He tells us wherein true happiness, true blessedness consists. There are, doubtless, many kinds of blessedness, of happiness in the world, which He would graciously allow, but which are not here distinctly mentioned.

¹ John i. 17.

Blessed are they who in the circle of a happy home will this night meet round a Christmas hearth, in innocent and playful mirth. Blessed too are they, who have done or are doing deeds of beneficence or instruction, — active and happy in the consciousness of power well used, of duty well performed, of knowledge spread by their means to minds which answer to their minds, and hearts which answer to their hearts. Blessed again are they who, from time to time feel, with a sudden glow of religious emotion, a special assurance of God's love, a childlike reliance on His mercy. And blessed are they of another class, who delight to feel or to trace His presence in ancient and sacred ordinances, in the ordinance, above all, of that Holy Sacrament, of which so many this day partake. All these, and many more, in their several ways may truly be called happy — may truly be blessed by Him who is rich in all spiritual blessings, and whose gifts of grace are manifold.

But yet these are not the highest states of blessedness, or rather, they are blessed only as they tend to produce and increase within us that constant, unbroken, holiest state of all,

which on this occasion our Lord pronounced emphatically "blessed."

The poor in spirit,—the humble, teachable, simple minds, that know the bounds of their own ignorance, that know the depths of their own sinfulness, that can bear to have their faults corrected—that can look afar off and not claim any spiritual perfections that do not belong to them, that are content with saying in silence and solitude, "God be merciful to me a sinner;"—these, little thought of by men, despised often both by the religious and irreligious, have their place in "the kingdom of God," which, as by rightful possession, is "theirs."

The mourners,—those who are bowed down by the weight of some life-long sorrow, or who are crushed by some fresh and sudden grief—those who remember what mischief their own sin has wrought for themselves and others—and who, having this experience of human infirmity and anguish, are willing to use aright so great an opportunity, and to receive even sorrow as a gift and blessing of God; they "shall be comforted," strengthened, elevated by that Divine sorrow which in Christ is specially revealed for our consolation.

The meek,—the disinterested, the unselfish, those who think little of themselves, and much of others— who think of the public good, and not of their own— who rejoice in good done not by themselves, but by others, by those whom they dislike, as well as by those whom they love—these shall gain far more than they lose ; they shall “inherit the earth” and “its fulness.”

They who hunger and thirst after righteousness,—whose consciences will not let them rest, who seek after a better standard of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, purity and impurity, justice and injustice, than they find in the world around them ; to whom justice is a positive joy, and injustice a deep and rankling grief ; who long with the longing of the Psalmist, in a dry and thirsty land, to be better themselves, and to make others better also ; who prize God’s law more than gold, yea than much fine gold ; whose heart and whose flesh cry out after the holiness of the living God ; whose eyes gush out with water because men keep not His law : these “shall be satisfied.” Alas ! it may be, not here ; but in that new and better world “wherein dwelleth

righteousness," where "they shall awake up after His likeness, and be satisfied with it."¹

The merciful — the pure in heart — the peacemakers (for time would fail me to dwell on each in detail) — they who shrink from an unkind word or work — they whose hearts are filled with a single, clear, clean love of truth and purity — they whose delight it is to abate enmity, to stifle controversy, to make men, nations, sects, churches, better acquainted, and therefore better disposed the one towards the other, — these "shall obtain the mercy" which they have showed to others — these "shall see God," and in His light shall see light — these "shall be" owned as "His children," who is the great Peacemaker, the Prince of Peace, the Reconciler of all things unto Himself.

And "*they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,*" they who have the courage and the honesty and the wisdom to do what is right and say what is true, and think what is just and desire what is holy, without regard to the misunderstanding, and the obloquy, and the contempt, and the hatred of the foolish and the bad — nay, sometimes even

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 13. Ps. xvii. 15.

of the wise and good, in this dull and perverse world—they too shall be blessed, though the great think scorn of them and the prosperous pass them by; they have a reward in their own hearts and consciences; for “theirs is the kingdom” not of this world, but “of God”—and “lo! the kingdom of God is within them.”¹

These are the states of Christian happiness—this is the pleasure of Christ’s disciples; this is the pure and undefiled religion which Christ, as at this time, brought into the world. To create and foster these dispositions within us, to make us thus blessed, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and died for us, and rose again. Ask each one for himself, How far hast thou attained or fallen short of any of these states? How far hast thou sought any of these gifts? or how far hast thou a part in the reverse catalogue of woes and miseries? “Woe to the rich” who live only for self-indulgence, or self-advancement, or self-amusement. “Woe to the” thoughtless “laughter” which turns everything, grave or gay alike, into an idle jest. “Woe to those that are

¹ Luke vi. 24—26.

full" — who care neither to receive instruction nor goodness from God or man, who are satisfied with their own knowledge, satisfied with their own opinions—who will not be corrected, who will not learn, who will not improve. "Woe to you when all men speak well of you," who are thought prudent, and prosperous, and safe; who have not had the courage to make a single enemy by just sincerity, or provoke a single censure by any act of unusual generosity or devotion.

III. But our Lord's words are not only the Law, but the Gospel of the New Dispensation. They not only guide us, but, as I said before, they console, strengthen, cheer us. They are not only "perfect and right," but they "convert the soul," they "rejoice the heart," they "give light to the eyes," they "give wisdom unto the simple." To ourselves, they are a Gospel, "a glad message," because they tell us that this highest state of happiness is within our reach, at any rate in a sense in which no other happiness is within our reach. Of all conditions of life none is more miserable than that of those who are always on the watch for some piece of good fortune, in which

they think that their happiness is involved, but which depends on accident or death, or the will or caprice of some other person. This is not the case with the blessedness of which Christ speaks. The kingdom of God, the blessedness of the kingdom, is not, "lo here! or lo there!" it is "within us." We carry it about with us; it is to be found, with God's grace, everywhere. If there be any gifts whatever, which we may hope God will bestow, in answer to our prayers, to our sincere and humble seeking, they are these. Wealth may bring cares, knowledge may puff up, friends may fall away, power may become a heavy burden, but meekness, truth, and love do indeed "rejoice the heart," and "give light to the eyes" of the simplest and of the greatest. No pilgrimage to distant lands, no reading of hundreds of books, is needed. This happiness is independent of everything, except God, and Christ, and our own souls. The humble and teachable child, the kind and merciful boy, the serious wife or daughter, the conscientious truth-loving man, he who makes peace, and he who despises ridicule, these are characters which may be found in the lowest as well as the highest stations, and

which, wherever they are found, are blessed in what they take, and blessed in what they give.

And, though we dare not reckon ourselves amongst such characters, yet it is a blessing, it is a Gospel of glad tidings to know, that they are there, that they exist, that they are possible. Those of us who have travelled in mountain-countries know how one range of hills rises behind another, one ever seeming the highest, till yet a higher appears behind it; each has its own beauty, each its own peculiarity. So is it with those various kinds of lesser happiness of which I before spoke. But in mountain-countries there is one range, one line of lofty summits, which always conveys a new sense of beauty, of awe, of sublimity, which nothing else can give—the range of eternal snow. High above all the rest we see the white peaks standing out in the blue sky, catching the first rays of the rising sun, and the last rays of the sun as it departs. So is it with this range of high Christian character which our Lord has set before us in the Sermon on the Mount. High above all earthly, lower happiness, the blessedness of those Eight Beatitudes towers into the heaven itself. They are white with the snows of

eternity ; they give a grace, a meaning, a dignity to all the rest of the earth over which they brood. And when the shades of evening gather round us, when the darkness of sorrow and sickness closes in, when other common worldly characters become cold, and dead, and lifeless, then those higher points of true Christian goodness stand out brighter and brighter ; the gleam of daylight can be seen reflected on their summits when it has vanished everywhere besides ; they are still there, living Gospels to instruct and cheer us ; on the tops of the mountains how beautiful are their feet who even by silent goodness bring peace and goodwill to man. And if it be so with any form of human blessedness and goodness, how much more is it with Him in whom all these Eight Beatitudes are for ever fulfilled. He who was 'meek and lowly of heart,' 'the Man of sorrows,'—hungering and thirsting to do His Father's will,—merciful to all,—pure and true, 'with a whiteness such as no fuller on earth could whiten'—the Peacemaker—the Persecuted—He is the Rock of Ages, 'blessed for evermore,' who, as on this day, was revealed to the world, and whose image has never since been withdrawn from us. That He has come,

that in Him Mercy and Truth have met together, that He came to make us like Himself, and that by union with Him we can be like Himself and share His blessedness, this is indeed the best tidings that has ever reached the human heart. The Church is the salt and the light of the world; the saints are the salt and the light of the Church; every man who receives any one of these blessings is the salt and the light of the circle in which he moves; but, in the highest sense of all, the life of Christ is the Light and the Salt of the whole world, "the light which lighteneth every man," "the light which shines in the darkness," even though "the darkness comprehend it not."

In Him and in the blessed Law which He brings, we are brought near to Him, and to one another. Above all earthly shadows, above the countersecting ranges of earthly difference, are seen the everlasting heights beyond, — "the Ancient of Days, whose garment is white as snow"—the "great multitude . . . clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands." "The fear of the Lord is clean, and endureth for ever." "He is the same, and His years shall never fail."¹

¹ Dan. vii. 9. Rev. vii. 9. Ps. xix. 9; cii. 27.

SERMON IV.

THE TRUTH OF CHRIST.

(INNOCENTS' DAY, 1858.)



EPH. iv. 21.

As the truth is in Jesus.

I SPOKE, when last I addressed you, of the aspect of our Saviour's teaching in which He appears before us as a Lawgiver, as laying down those rules of Christian holiness which alone can bring us true happiness in this world or the next. I purpose on this Sunday to bring before you another aspect, in which He appears before us as the Teacher of Truth. We are reminded in the Epistle of the day, that the special characteristic of those who shall stand nearest to the throne of God and the Lamb, is that there shall be "no guile found in their mouths." It may, therefore, be not unfitting to see how, in the highest

sense, this was true of Him whose presence we are thus to approach.

Let us once more place ourselves amongst the multitudes who followed Him on earth, amongst those who heard of Him from the Apostles. What would have been, if not the first, at least one overwhelming impression we should have received from His manner of address, from the tone of His words, from the sin which He most frequently denounced ?

I. It may seem so much a matter of course, that we almost fear to name it ; yet we need not fear to name what apostles have named before us, what He expressly and repeatedly claims for Himself. That impression would undoubtedly have been His absolute and transparent *truthfulness*. "In His mouth" (so speak both Prophet and Apostle), as in that of His nearest followers, "there was no guile."¹ "To this end," He says of Himself, "was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto *the truth*." "I am *the truth*." "If ye continue in my word, ye shall know *the truth*, and *the truth* shall make you free."²

¹ Isa. liii. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 22.

² John xviii. 37 ; xiv. 6 ; viii. 31, 32.

The very words which He used to enforce and impress this unswerving certainty and sincerity on those who heard Him are handed down to us: "*Verily, verily*, I say unto you;" that is, as they might be more exactly given, "*Amen, amen*, I say unto you." "Amen" (the actual Hebrew asseveration that He employed, as though it were, "In the name of truth and faithfulness I speak to you") is used by Himself no less than seventy times in the course of the four Gospels, and used by no one else besides. And that this impression of His teaching continued, and was caught up even by those who had never seen Him upon earth, appears from the constant reference of S. Paul to this very quality, sometimes to this very expression of it. Jesus Christ was "not yea and nay," but "in Him was *yea*, and in Him *amen*;"¹ "I say the *truth* in Christ;"² "The *truth* of Christ is in me;"³ "As the *truth* is in *Jesus*;"⁴ where the context clearly shows that it is no general abstract doctrine of which he is speaking, but the actual living truthfulness of Christ. "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man *truth* with his neighbour."

¹ 2 Cor. i. 20.² Rom. ix. i.³ 2 Cor. xi. 10.⁴ Eph. iv. 21.

And now let us see how this entire and searching truthfulness manifested itself in the substance of His teaching. "He went about *doing good*." This was the description of His practical life. He went about speaking, revealing, disclosing *the truth*, in God, in man, in Himself. This was the aim of His life as an instructor, as a prophet, as the Light that lighteneth every man. And how did He accomplish it? It is a remarkable evidence of the unearthly origin of our Master's teaching and mission, that when we come to seek for comparisons and human likenesses by which we can bring it home to our minds, we can find no lower level than the very highest point to which human reason has ever reached. His method was the same as that employed by the greatest of all heathen aspirers after truth, the famous philosopher Socrates. That highest and holiest of all merely human teachers, we are told, devoted himself, for the space of thirty years, to wandering to and fro amongst his countrymen, disputing, rebuking, questioning each one that he met, in the market-place or the field, drawing out from each, by his questions, the truth which lay concealed in

the dull mind or heart of the listener,—disclosing to each the extent of his ignorance, the limits of his knowledge, dispelling the mist of self-deceit, of self-delusion,—bidding each one carry home this great truth, “Know thyself.” What Socrates thus sought as the sole end of his life, that we may reverently say, was at least one object, though amongst many, of the teaching of our Lord and Master. The method was the same; it must have been the same,—for truth, and the highest means of arriving at truth, are the same. He, too, was to be seen everywhere, not merely delivering new doctrines, not merely propagating new codes of practice, but arguing, convincing, drawing out from each man’s conscience, the truth which each man most needed. As on the first day when He appeared as a scholar in the Temple, “both hearing *and asking questions*,”¹ so to the latest evening of His life He continued to teach, both by speaking *and asking questions*. He knew what was in man, He saw the thoughts of man, and therefore He read to each the secrets of his own heart; the woman of

¹ Luke ii. 46.

Samaria at the well, the Pharisees who were told to cast the stone if they were without sin,—the man who sought permission to follow Him,—the man who sought permission to depart home¹,—each felt and knew that he was in the presence of One, before whom all things were clear, from before whose face falsehood fled away. And most of all is this seen in the mention of that sin, which above all others He rebukes, exposes, and makes manifest—“Hypocrisy.”—“Be not ye as the *hypocrites* are.” “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is *hypocrisy*.”² And, as if corresponding to the eight blessings of the Sermon on the Mount are the eight curses—the eight woes denounced in the 23rd chapter of S. Matthew’s Gospel, every one of them against the same evil.—“Woe unto you, — woe unto you, — woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, *hypocrites*.”

II. What are we to learn from this aspect of our Saviour’s life,—from this sight of “the truth as it is in Jesus?”

¹ John viii. 7; Matt. viii. 19, 21.

² Matt. vi. 5; Luke xii. 1.

1. First, we learn to value at its right cost this pearl of great price, wherever it may be found. If one purpose of His being born into the world, as at this time, was to bear witness to the truth, we may be sure that it is worth seeking, worth loving; and, if need be, with Stephen and the noble army of martyrs, worth dying for. Truth in religion, truth in history, truth in science, truth in conversation, truth in everything, all in their different ways, come before us with the sanction of Him who is the Truth. Let us "rejoice," as the Apostle says, "in the truth,"¹ wherever it be. Let us always ask about this or that opinion, not "Is it dangerous?" "Is it safe?" "Is it useful?" "Is it agreeable?" but, "Is it true?" Let us remember, with the Apostle, that if we wished ever so much, "we *can* do nothing *against* the truth, but only *for* the truth."² Truth is great, and truth will prevail. This is our warning, our reward, our consolation.

2. But in this abstract form our Lord's sanction of truth affects only a few. In its practical form, however, we all need it; and we

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 6.

² 2 Cor. xiii. 8.

are all apt to escape the point of His teaching by overlooking the exact force of His words. We are seldom guilty of direct falsehood, and so we think that we need not to be reminded of truthfulness. We know still more surely that we are not guilty of what is commonly called hypocrisy, and so we pass over, as though they had no concern for us, the woes denounced by Him against hypocrites. "Hypocrites" in the gross and common sense of the word—men wilfully and deliberately pretending to be religious when they are in heart villains—these are, indeed, very rare—almost impossible—probably not one is to be found in this or any congregation that we shall commonly enter. But "hypocrites" in the true, original, scriptural sense are, alas! too common everywhere. "One who acts a part," such is the true meaning of the word. One who deceives others, or, what is much more frequent, deceives himself, into thinking that he is better than he is. One who needs above all other things to be questioned out of his illusions as by the old philosopher. One who knows not himself, who knows not his own special sin, who knows not his special

ignorance. One who is good, not because he loves goodness, but because it is required of him by his profession, by his station, by public opinion. One who affects language, feelings, manners, which are not natural to him. One who sees the mote of a blunder, an error of judgment, in his brother's eye, and sees not the beam of selfishness, of slander, of bigotry, of worldliness in his own eye. One who thinks that it is very good to require religion, or correct belief, from others, but pays no heed to it himself.—“*Hypocrites*” in this sense are to be found in every congregation; we are all of us in this sense open to our Lord's rebuke: there is this special reason for denouncing this kind of sin, that some one is certain to be present who must be more or less conscious of it when it is pointed out, or who, if not conscious of it, needs to be made conscious of it. Publicans and harlots, thieves and murderers, blasphemers and infidels, are rarely seen within the walls of a church. But the self-deceived, the artificial, the untruthful, the half-truthful, the careless of truth, the crooked in heart, the double-minded, the inconsistent,—these, or some of these,

are sure to be in every church throughout the land, as sure as the Scribes and Pharisees were in the Temple, — for this very reason caught by our Master's rebuke then, as they may be caught by it now.

Doubtless, there is a truthfulness which is mere offensiveness, an affectation of truthfulness which is in itself untruthfulness and hypocrisy. Doubtless, too, there is an inconsistency which may well be called "happy ;" an inconsistency which shrinks from carrying out to the uttermost its own evil principles, and thus saves a man even in spite of himself. Doubtless, too, there is a false humility, a false honesty, which has been well called the Devil's hypocrisy : the foolish, miserable wish, chiefly to be found amongst the young, of trying to make themselves appear, not better, but worse than they truly are. These, however, are exceptions which do not interfere with the necessity of our Lord's exaltation of true sincerity, His rebuke of hollowness and self-deceit. Many and many are the forms which this self-illusion takes. Many has been the proud vain man who has fancied himself humble because he could speak of the general

depravity of all mankind, or condemn sins to which he was not himself inclined. Many have been they who have been secure in the correctness, the purity, the antiquity of their belief when they have really been involved in deadly errors, sometimes in the very errors which they thought to attack. Many have been those who have prided themselves on their liberality, on their freedom from prejudice, on their broad, enlightened views, when they have been truly more intolerant, more bigoted, more exclusive, than the darkest ages from which they thought themselves delivered. Many are they who speak of the wide extent of knowledge and of the vast field still untrodden, and who yet will be as little willing to confess that they are themselves ignorant of any single fact as those who talk much of general depravity are willing to confess that they are guilty of any single sin. Many are they who fancy that they have been persecuted for the sake of truth, or principle, or righteousness, when they have really brought on their misfortunes by their own folly, or ignorance, or obstinacy. Many are they who believe that they are sacrificing

themselves to the cause of God, when they are truly following only their own inclination or fancy ; many who believe that they are following their consciences, as they call it, when, as has been truly said, they are in reality only driving their consciences before them.

III. All these and many more are amongst the false, artificial states which Christ came to destroy. Well may we say, "From all blindness of heart, from all pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy, good Lord deliver us." Well may we look and hope for the time when "the day shall break, and the shadows flee away." Let us see how we can apply our Lord's example and join in His work. One point is, that we must endeavour to bring out of ourselves, and out of others, the truth which is already within us. No feelings, no doctrines, no practices, are good and true to us, however good and true in themselves, which we ourselves do not, in some degree at least, feel to be true and good. Truth which is forced upon us from without, or adopted by us without conviction, is really no truth at all. No doctrines

are so important, so likely to take hold of a man, as those which, imperfectly perhaps, but in some measure, he has approached before. If ever we can be made to act, to know, to think up to our own professions, our own words, our own creed, we shall have made a far nearer step to truth than by embracing, with ever so much ardour, the truth which comes to us from others. So taught the parent of ancient philosophy. He used to say that truths of this kind were like our own children, and that his part was to assist at their birth and their education. So taught, and so practised "the Wisdom,"¹ not of man, but "of God." He encouraged every spark of truth which lay asleep in the mind of Jew or Gentile, disciple or enemy, raising up the broken reed, blowing into a flame the smoking flax: Himself the very truth itself, because He "spoke only what He knew, and testified only what He had seen," — "the deep things of God," because He had received them from the Father — the deep things of men, because "He knew what was in man."² Think over everything in your minds of which you are

¹ Luke xi. 49.

² John ii. 25; iii. 11.

quite sure, and act up to this. Do not trouble yourselves about things of which you are not quite convinced. Do not make yourselves out better than you are; but be as good as the best part that is in you, and then you will gradually grow better and wiser, "without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

And this brings us to the concluding and best means by which we can arrive at the truth of Christ, and that is, by communion with Him in spirit, and in truth. Had we seen Him on earth, we cannot doubt that any false subterfuge would have quailed before the glance of his eye; every artifice would have been rent asunder by the keen bright sword of His word. So it may be still. Fix in your minds one of His "quick, sharp, two-edged" sayings:—they do indeed "pierce even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow"—they do indeed "discern the thoughts and intents of our hearts." There is "no creature that is not manifest in His sight,"—"all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."¹ "In Him is light, and no dark-

¹ Heb. iv. 12, 13.

ness at all.”¹ May He “unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit,” and prepare us for that city, whose street is pure gold, as it were transparent glass, from which is cast out “whatsoever loveth or maketh a lie.”²

¹ John i. 5.

² Rev. xxi. 18, 21, 27.

SERMON V.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

(PREACHED JAN. 4, 1857.)



MATT. viii. 28.

And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.

ON the following Sundays, I purpose to consider the special aspect of our Lord's teaching brought out in the several Gospels. The first that we must consider is that which appears in the Gospel of S. Matthew, now being read in the Church Services, and which is best described in the words of the text. Let us take each part of it separately, and see what we may learn from it.

I. First, what is meant by "His doctrine?" In our time the word is commonly used in the sense of an abstract, speculative truth, as opposed to practical, moral lessons or applications of truth. We should say, for example, that the creeds contained "the doctrine," and the catechism "the practice" of Christianity. We should call a discourse on Predestination or on the Eternal Generation a doctrinal sermon, and a discourse against theft or falsehood a moral sermon. We should call the first part of the Epistle to the Romans doctrinal, and the latter part practical. This kind of language is convenient and allowable, if we are careful to remember that it is modern not ancient language,—the language of men and not the language of Scripture. In Scripture the word *doctrine*, which is in fact only another word for *teaching*, is never so confined. In this very passage it is applied, not to any truths which we should now call doctrines, but to the Sermon on the Mount, which from first to last contains not a single statement which would commonly be called doctrinal. And so throughout the New Testament it includes

equally all parts of the Gospel teaching. The modern distinction which has since grown up was then unknown. Every precept was a doctrine; every doctrine was a precept. The highest revelations of the nature of God and of man were given with a direct practical bearing on the conduct and hearts of mankind. The humblest precepts of humility, of courtesy, of love, of justice, were revelations of the mind of God and of the salvation of man. It is important to remember this: we are all of us apt to put asunder what God has thus joined together. Some are tempted to think that Christian belief is more important than Christian practice. Others are tempted to think that Christian practice may easily abound without foundation in Christian belief. Against both errors the Scriptural use of the word "doctrine" is a useful and constant protest. The "word of Christ" was "meekness, righteousness, and truth." And, again, it shows us that there is, perhaps, a greater unity amongst Christians than we are sometimes willing to allow. In Christian doctrine, commonly so called, there are, doubtless, great and manifold differences.

But Christian doctrine, in the Biblical, and we may add, Liturgical sense, contains a vast body of truth, on which there is no difference at all amongst any who call themselves by the name of Christ. And it is surely both a duty and a comfort to remember that in these matters those who are for us are far more than those who are against us ; that in the moral and spiritual doctrines which form the substance of the greater part of our Lord's teaching and the main object of all of it, there is hardly any ground for the unbeliever's taunt that Christians cannot agree as to the tenets of their own religion.

II. Secondly, the effect on the people. They "were *astonished*," "were awestruck," "were bewildered," "were lost in wonder." Such is the full force of the word used in this and many like occasions to describe the effect produced by our Saviour's teaching on those that heard it. It may seem a strong expression to use for the effect of truths so familiar as those of the Sermon on the Mount, or of the parables best known to us ; yet it is not really so. Even now, to a certain extent, the same startling,

astonishing impression is produced by teaching which in anything like the same manner brings home to the hearts and lives of the hearers the great truths of God. We hear without astonishment, without awe, without any sense of freshness or novelty, or immediate stirring interest, mere expositions of theological truth on the one side, or mere moral essays on the other side ; but the moment that the two come together, the moment that morality is taught with the fervour and solemnity which only religion can give, or that religion is invested with that reality and conviction of truth that can only be given by its application to the moral duties of common life, then more or less a shock is always produced, the eye opens, and the ear listens, and the mind wakens, and the conscience starts up, and the whole man is struck with awe, and “ the secrets of his heart are made manifest,” and “ he reports that God of a truth is there.”¹

It is so, even in the very imperfect manifestations which are seen in our day of this true Gospel teaching ; and if the energy, the fervour, the eloquence, which in former days were used in behalf of some abstract or dis-

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

puted doctrine of Predestination, or Assurance, or the like, were employed in behalf of those great moral truths which all acknowledge yet all forget, — if the earnestness and zeal which are devoted to matters of mint, anise, and cummin, were devoted to the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and truth — if this union were to be accomplished even now, — who can say what immense, what untried, what astonishing results might be produced on multitudes and multitudes, who now turn away from the words of the preacher, in weariness or despair? What we faintly see now — what we can conceive as a possibility hereafter — was what must actually have taken place in the highest degree when our Lord opened His mouth in the discourses on the hills of Galilee. His teaching had all the force of antiquity, all the freshness of novelty. It appealed to the innermost and most ancient feelings of the human heart; yet, as contrasted with what had been said by them of old time, it was new and startling, full of awful severity, full of overpowering mercy. It was penetrated through and through with the spirit of un-earthly fire; yet it had always a hold on the

solid earth whereon we stand — on the rock which he only has, who “not only heareth but *doeth* the sayings of Christ.”¹ However high and deep His teaching, yet it always bore on practice. His morality was His religion, His religion was His morality; and the effect was that the people “were astonished” by His words no less than by His works; they were carried out of themselves, and driven into a higher world; “they marvelled and went their way.”²

III. This brings us, thirdly, to the special reason given for their astonishment. “For He taught as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.” Whatever other causes they might have for their marvel,—and, as we have seen, they had many,—this was the universal and peculiar cause; and it is eminently instructive, because it helps us to understand a difficulty that may arise when we consider the general question of reception of Divine truth. Wonder and astonishment are described as the temper of Christ’s followers. Even of the followers of human knowledge it has been well said, “Phi-

¹ Matt. vii. 24.

² Matt. xxii. 22.

losophy begins in wonder, and ends in wonder, and admiration fills up all the space between." Awe, reverence, humility, are the very first qualifications for learning any truth, especially for learning the truths which come from Heaven, which are outside of ourselves, beyond ourselves, above ourselves. How, we may ask, is this to be reconciled with what we also know well, with what I said last Sunday —that truth is only truth to those who have something corresponding to it within themselves; and truth which is forced upon us by others, without our own conviction, is no truth at all? The answer, at least the chief answer, is contained in the words of the text: "The people were astonished, for He spake as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." It is true more or less of all wise and holy teaching, it is true of all Scripture teaching, it is in the highest degree true of our Lord's teaching, that it comes to us with an authority which of itself commands our attention. For that very reason it awakens a response in our consciences, puts us in the attitude of listeners, of scholars, of humble disciples, even before we know what is going to be said. The

Teacher becomes a part of our best and highest selves. We hear Him, "not because of the saying of others," but because "we have heard Him ourselves;"¹ not because He compels us by force to listen to Him, but because there is something in His manner, His look, His tone, which wins, attracts, confounds us. "He goes before us, and we know His voice,"² and are willing to follow Him though we know not whither He leads us.

Consider the words of Christ, as they must have appeared to those who first heard them. Truly they were spoken with authority, and not as the Scribes. The Scribes, the expounders of the law, wrote volumes upon volumes to enforce what the law said, and what they said. They defended themselves by endless arguments, mystical, fanciful, minute,—they relied on the authority of the great Rabbinical teachers and doctors, of Hillel and of Shammai and Gamaliel,—they counted the letters and syllables of the law. But they had no authority of their own, no force, no originality; if here and there they said anything good or true, it was received in spite of their teaching, not

¹ John iv. 42.

² John x. 4.

because of it. And now, in contrast, read the Sermon on the Mount. Observe the brief, solemn, decisive manner in which He deals out His blessings, His laws, His condemnation of those who spoke in old times. "Verily, verily, I say unto you;" "It was said by them of old time" thus and thus, "but *I* say unto you." There are no reasons given, there is no argument, there is no rhetoric, there is no logic, there is no appeal to passion or feeling. It is the word of a Master, it is the word of a King, it is the WORD of GOD. And as it was at that time, so it has been ever since. We can still see the stamp of royal, of divine authority stamped upon every sentence. There is still the same contrast between His teaching and the teaching of all who have come afterwards. We are "astonished" as we read, for He speaks not as ourselves, not as the Scribes and preachers of our own times, or of the old times before us, not as the Reformers, not as the Schoolmen, not as the Fathers: nay, (must we not even with all reverence say?) not even as the Apostles. Even they, even the blessed Apostles themselves, even the great Apostle of the Gentiles, even the beloved Disciple,

are on a lower level than their Lord and Master; even they appeal to Him, and He appeals to no one—even they rest on Him, and He rests on Himself.

Yet, although there is this distinction between the highest of all teachers and those who are higher than all besides, we may see in this one attribute of divine teaching a characteristic which, in a greater or less degree, goes through the whole Bible, and is found in the Bible only. As I said on a former occasion, we sometimes ask what is meant by Inspiration. This is Inspiration. It is Inspiration, it is the gift of God's Spirit, that through the whole of the Scriptures there is, though expressed "in divers manners," the same unmistakable mode of speaking "with authority, and not as the Scribes." We feel as we read, that there is in the Scriptures a solemnity, a simplicity, a dignity, which ordinary writings have not. They command our attention, they speak to us directly, they take the command of our souls in the storms and dangers of the world; even as in actual storms and shipwrecks, the crew of the sinking ship—in sudden emergencies, the agitated household—in revolts and revolutions, the raging

multitude—is hushed into submission by the commanding voice, irresistible weight, and calm composure of some powerful mind, some heroic character, raised up by the greatness of the crisis. It is this in the teaching of Scripture, of our Lord especially, that solves all those difficulties which we are apt to conjure up as to the conflicts that may arise between human and divine authority, between the claims of reason and the claims of revelation. Such conflicts do occasionally arise : but they are, for the most part, the phantoms of our own fears. Almost always we shall find that when human reason or learning has found some apparently insuperable difficulty, it is not the Scriptures, but the Scribes, or expounders of the Scriptures, that are in fault. Almost always we shall find that when the champions of Scripture believe themselves to be assailed by the pride of reason and learning, it is not reason or learning, but some fancy of their own, some misunderstanding of the intention of the Bible, that has crossed their path. The Scriptures speak to us, Christ speaks to us, as a father speaks to his children, with authority ; but with an authority which is not a mere

arbitrary tyrannical authority, but an authority which is felt and obeyed, because He who speaks and they who listen understand that they have but one interest. He who speaks knows what is good for those whom He addresses ; they who listen know what there is in Him which invites their submission. No, we need not fear ; all that we claim is to be allowed to sit at the feet of Christ. There may be difficulties in the applications, the comparisons, of Scripture ; but the Scriptures, as they are in themselves, taken as their own interpreter,—their object, their spirit, their words rightly examined,—are sufficient. Give us the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, in all their manifold and most instructive diversity ; give us the Epistles, as they come breathing and burning from the hands of the Apostles ; give us, above all, the crown and completion of Evangelical teaching in the four Gospels, and we want nothing more. Take them, as they were first delivered to us ; take them as they were meant to be taken ; as “ profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that we may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good

works ;” then we shall indeed receive them as “given by the inspiration of God ;”¹ they will indeed be “a lantern to our feet, and a light to our path.”

When this year closes upon us, may we be more the disciples of Christ than we were before ; not gazing in blank astonishment at His power, but doing with all our might what He has told us to do ; convincing ourselves, “by doing His will,” that “the doctrine which He has taught” of life and death, truth and duty, this world and the next, is truly “of God.”²

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

² John vii. 17.

NOTE. — For the meaning of the word “Doctrine” (*διδασχῆ*) (p. 61), see further, Sermon X., and compare Arnold’s “Fragment on the Church,” pp. 155—160. The agreement of the Liturgical with the Scriptural use of the word may be seen from the following passages. “To fashion *the lives* of you and yours after the rule and *doctrine* of Christ.” “To fashion *your own selves, and your families*, according to the *doctrine* of Christ” (Ordination of Priests). “*Following the holy doctrine* which he taught” (Collect for the Conversion of S. Paul). “Doctrine,” as late as the 17th century, was opposed not to “practice,” but to “discipline.” See Hooker, *E. P.*, III. x. 7.

SERMON VI.

THE CONSOLATIONS OF CHRIST.

(FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY, 1857.)

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LUKE iv. 18, 19.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

ON previous Sundays I have described the general aspect of our Lord's teaching, especially as exhibited in the Gospel of S. Matthew. It is the peculiarity of S. Mark's Gospel that in this respect it adds hardly anything¹ to what we learn from S. Matthew. We may

¹ The chief exception is Mark iv. 21—29.

pass, therefore, at once to the character of the doctrine of Christ as brought out in the Gospel of S. Luke ; and for this purpose the words which I have just read, following up, after a short interval, the Gospel of this Sunday, form the best introduction.

The whole scene is characteristic of the tender, the pathetic, the singularly human and domestic strain which breathes through the words of this Evangelist. It was in the synagogue of His own town of Nazareth, where He had been brought up. He was there, as for nearly twenty years He had been, according to His custom, on the Sabbath-day. In front, as usual, in the foremost places, were the Scribes and expounders of the law ; behind them were the rough and almost savage peasants of that wild mountain village ; round about Him were faces and reminiscences new and old, — the vacant place of Joseph, — His brethren, James and Joses, and Simon and Jude, incredulously watching to see what He would do¹ ; within hearing, too, His sisters and His mother, who had long pondered all that she had seen and heard for the last thirty years ; Nathanael

¹ Mark vi. 3 ; John vii. 5.

also, we can hardly doubt, from the neighbouring Cana, fresh from the newly awakened discovery that he had found the King of Israel. In this assembly the youthful Teacher rose up for the first time, and claimed His right of reading the Holy Scriptures before the congregation. It was that portion of the sacred year when the prophecies of Isaiah were read ; and there was delivered to Him the long parchment scroll on which they were written in the Hebrew characters. He unrolled the parchment, and when He had found the place, the 61st chapter, He read aloud the words in which the Prophet announces the coming deliverance of his country : “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor ; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” He paused, — the words that followed, speaking of the day of vengeance and of the local circumstances of the Prophet’s time, would have narrowed the application of the sacred text, — He paused, and rolled up

the scroll once more, and gave it to the minister, and then, as was the custom of those times for one who intended to teach, and as was always His custom, "He sat down." "And the eyes of all those that were in the synagogue were fastened upon Him"—Scribe and peasant, mother and brother, friend and enemy, old and young; every eye was strained to watch the first opening of those lips which had so long been sealed. At last the result of that wisdom and grace which had been growing year by year in deep seclusion would be made known¹,—at last Mary would see the meaning of all those strange deeds and sayings which she had kept in her heart²,—at last the astonished disciples would see what good thing could come out of the poor, despised Nazareth.³ And He began to say to them, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." And they all "bare witness to Him, and marvelled at the gracious words that proceeded from His mouth."

What those gracious words were we are not told. But we have the text, and from the text we can infer the discourse; nay more,

¹ Luke ii. 52. ² Luke ii. 19, 51. ³ John i. 46.

although we have not the actual discourse which was spoken on this occasion, we have it in the whole of His life and history,—we have it especially in that portion of His teaching which is preserved to us in the same Evangelist.

Let us consider what that record is — and we, like the Nazarenes, shall bear witness that “this Scripture is indeed fulfilled in our ears.” Let us sit at His feet and hear His gracious words, thankful that in these words of healing, no less than in His severe and holy law, His searching and transparent truth, He teaches as “one having authority, and not as the Scribes.”

I. First, let us observe His infinite tenderness. It was always expressed in His actions. Let us now see how it was expressed in His words. “To preach good tidings to the poor;” to “heal the broken heart;” to “give sight to the blind,” and liberty to the captive; to “proclaim the acceptable year,” the jubilee of all mankind — the very music of the words expresses to us the sweet consolations which He came to bring. We can almost imagine how

Luke, the beloved physician, would dwell with delight on the thought that for that great lazar-house of human misery and infirmity, which every physician knows so well, he had here found the remedy — cheering news for the oppressed, healing to the heart broken by anxious sorrow, air and liberty in exchange for the dark narrow dungeon, light to the restored eye, freedom to the limbs cramped and bruised by the long bondage of sin, suffering, or ignorance.

Take, for example, the Parable of the rich man and Lazarus, recorded in the sixteenth chapter of this Gospel. What a fountain of healing for all ages springs up in that story! How many compunctions has it stirred up, or ought it to stir up, in the hearts of easy, affluent men, who may feel that they have no concern with the poor who lie out of their sight! What a warning to us who live in this age and country, where the rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, lives almost side by side, street by street, house by house, with the dens of filth and poverty and wretchedness! Or if we turn to the other part of the

story, how many a lonely life and suffering deathbed may be relieved, has been relieved, by the few words which tell how the poor beggar, full of sores, was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom! Not neglected, though he seemed to be; not without hope, for there is a better world beyond, where he who has humbly striven to walk with God here will walk with God hereafter; where he who has sought the fellowship of the noble-minded and the gentle-hearted and the high-souled upon earth, will rest in their bosoms beyond the reach of care, beyond the reach of sin, beyond the sound of scoff, or taunt, or reproach for ever. Truly this one parable, preached not only in word but in deed, throughout the cities of this great country would indeed be a Gospel of life wherever its sounds could reach.

But Christ's healing power appears in inward, yet more than in outward, suffering. It is not a mere emotion of benevolence or pity, that gives to His teaching this peculiarly touching and consoling character. There is a law, if one may so speak, a principle, of mercy, no less than of justice, in all that

He said and did. He pitied, because He loved. He loved, because He saw through all the wretchedness and darkness and bondage of evil, that there was in every human soul a possibility of repentance, of restoration ; a germ of good, which, however stifled and overlaid, yet was capable of recovery, of health, of freedom, of perfection. He threw Himself (so to speak) on the reception of man, “manifested Himself to every man’s conscience,” required nothing from him except the simple sincere turning to God,—no long preparation, no bitter penance for past sins, nothing but the desire to forsake evil, and to seek good. To the worst of sinners, to publicans and harlots and malefactors, He held out the hope of liberty, of holiness, of goodness, and therefore of salvation. He came not to the whole, but to the sick ; He came, as His name implies, “to save,” not the righteous, but “sinners,” “from their sins.” The reconciliation of the world to God was the burden of His teaching, as it was the object of His life and of His death. Let those who on this matter have been perplexed by difficulties, whether in other parts of Scripture or in human expositions, turn to the Parable

of the Prodigal Son. There we shall find the Saviour Himself telling us what God's mind is in seeking to redeem us, what man's mind must be in order to be redeemed. Read that parable well. Fix it in your minds. You cannot go wrong, in believing what Christ there sets before us. The youngest child may understand enough of it. The most experienced Christian will not by much thinking get to the end of it. The most hardened profligate may bear witness to its truth. The most scrupulous pastor need not be afraid of trusting himself to its spirit. "*I will arise and go to my father ; and will say, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and am not worthy to be called Thy servant.*" How little, yet how much, is required in these words, from us who have gone astray. How little, for it is but the sincere confession to ourselves of what we are and of what we wish to be. How much, for in that sincere confession, followed out honestly, faithfully, hopefully, is the whole course of Christian life : repentance, faith, love, peace. And "*when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck,*

and kissed him.” How simple, how easy to be understood by all, yet how comprehensive, how vast in what it contains ; no less than the whole mystery of Redemption, no less than “ God in Christ ” (for in the Redemption, especially and indissolubly, Christ and the Father are one), “ God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.” If this parable were all that S. Luke had preserved of the teaching of Christ, we might well marvel at the gracious words which proceeded from His mouth — we should perceive, without doubt, that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to give light, and life, and liberty.

II. But there is another point involved in this description, almost inseparable from the first, though we in fact often part them asunder. The Gospel of S. Luke, as is well known, was written for the Gentiles by the companion of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Now as, in S. Paul’s own teaching, the doctrine of man’s justification by faith is always connected, is indeed one and the same, with the great truth of the admission of the Gentiles — so in

a still higher and deeper sense the infinite mercy of Christ is one and the same with His universal sympathy. *We* are apt to say exactly the reverse. We have felt, it may be, the sense of His mercy in some one form or channel, and are prone to believe that it can reach no one else in any other way. Not so our Lord and Saviour; not so the great Physician of our souls. He knew that the infirmities of men are manifold. He has not one medicine, but a thousand, for our thousand sicknesses. The change of heart, the turning to God, the new creation, this is the same in every human being. But the modes of change are infinite, and He recognised them all. The centurion He justified for his faith as a heathen; Peter He blessed for his faith as an Apostle; the father of the demoniac boy He received for his belief in unbelief; Zacchæus He forgave for his upright restitution; the woman who was a sinner He justified for her love; the publican He justified for his humility; the thief on the cross He justified for his earnest hope: those that crucified Him He forgave even for their ignorance, "for they know not what they do." Not one of these expressed their penitence or

faith in the same way ; not one of them expressed it in the way that many now in our day will require of every one ; yet they were all welcomed by Him who “ will in no wise cast out any that cometh to Him.” As in His Father’s house are many mansions, so to that house are many approaches. It is not for us to force all men through the only one which suits ourselves. The gate to Heaven is sufficiently narrow by reason of our manifold sins, and of God’s perfect holiness : the entrance through the needle’s eye is close enough by reason of our own cares, and distractions, and self-indulgence ; let us not choke it up yet more by obstacles of which Christ says nothing. The Gentile world, of old times, might well claim this Gospel as their own. We, too, in this half-heathen world of ours, — with men, women, and children who know nothing of church, or minister, who are tossed to and fro in the ceaseless toil and wear of this mighty Babylon,—we, too, may well claim its lessons for ourselves and our people also. They are the very souls, the very sufferers, the very patients, whom the good Physician came to heal. They are the very sheep whom

the good Shepherd came to seek. It almost seems as if for the time the Saviour's countenance was turned away from the world which then as now would have been called religious, — from the righteous who need no repentance ; from the whole who need no physician ; from the Pharisee who fasted twice in the week, and gave tithes of all that he possessed, and was not as other men ; from the Scribe who knew well which was the great commandment — from all these, from us who are here assembled, He seems for the time to turn away ; from you who hear, from us who preach and minister, — from the well-conditioned, from the orthodox, from the blameless,—from those who have been in His house always,—He turns in this Gospel away. Not, oh my brethren ! not, we may humbly trust, in displeasure, not as though He did not accept our sacrifice of prayer and praise, or as though He did not value above all price the gentle, guileless, tenor of devout religious life ; but to show us that He has other sheep not of this fold—sheep astray upon the mountains, despised and rejected of men. He turns to them, to those who are far away, to those who are not within these

walls, to the bruised reed and the smoking flax —to those who despise themselves, and are condemned by us— to the dwellers in taverns and dark places—to doubters, and wanderers, and scoffers, —to all and each of them He, whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, turns and addresses Himself again and again in this divine Gospel. One by one we see them, we recognise them. The publican, who stands afar off, and will not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven — the woman who is a sinner, from whose touch Simon shrank back in horror — the soldier, who would not venture to ask Him under his roof — the heathen mother, whom His disciples would have driven away as a dog from His presence — the rough sailor, who had been washing his nets on the shores of the lake — the man of business, who sate all day long at the receipt of customs — the stranger, who did his works of mercy, not following with the Apostles — the wild youth, who had wandered from his father's house— the savage robber, who hung on the accursed tree — the outcast, heretical Samaritan, who rode on his solitary way from Jerusalem to Jericho — to each and all of these He turned :

you can see it in His gestures, you can read it in His parables.¹ For each of these, at this moment far away from church or preacher, He has His gracious benediction. Amongst them, if they would but hear Him, He walks (with reverence, yet with truth, must it be spoken) as though He was of them, and not of us: so that they who go by are tempted to say of Him: "Behold a friend of publicans and sinners." "He is gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." "He is beside Himself." "He is a Samaritan." "He speaketh blasphemies." "He is reckoned amongst the transgressors."²

O freedom, beyond our narrow conception! O grace and condescension, beyond our poor imitation! O consolation, blessed indeed to those who can receive it rightly! O Gospel, at once most evangelical and most catholic, uniting in one those two well-known words, turned by party strife to gall and wormwood, yet in themselves sweeter than honey and the

¹ Luke v. 2, 27, vii. 6, 37, 39, x. 33, xv. 1—32, xviii. 9, xix. 2, xxiii. 34, 42; Matt. xv. 28; John viii. 11.

² Luke v. 21, vii. 34, xix. 7, xxii. 37; Mark iii. 21; John viii. 48.

honeycomb! Most *evangelical*, because there is proclaimed to the broken heart, in the most moving, the most tender accents, the glad tidings of infinite mercy and infinite hope. Most *catholic*, because that tidings is proclaimed to the universal race of man—to the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the world—to those who are not with us as well as to those who are—to those with whom we have no dealings as well as to those at whose feet we sit—to strangers, aliens, and enemies, as well as to our friends, our neighbours, and ourselves.

O most welcome and acceptable year of Jubilee, whenever it dawns upon us, which shall see us go and do likewise!

SERMON VII.

BELIEF IN CHRIST.

(SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY, 1857.)

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JOHN VI. 29.

This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.

WE have now come to the teaching of Christ, as it appears in the Gospel of S. John. Up to this point we have followed our Saviour's teaching as that of our highest Master, as containing all that is eternal in endurance, all that is pure in moral elevation, all that is transparent in truthfulness, all that is commanding in authority, all that is tender in mercy and universal in sympathy. Even thus far, however, this is much more than could be truly said of a merely human teacher. Such a

combination is itself Divine. And even thus far the results of His teaching are much beyond what could have occurred to the most enlightened heathen or the most devout Jew. Such a union of morality with religion is in itself peculiarly and essentially Christian; it is more distinctively and emphatically Christian doctrine than some of the most remarkable of the abstract truths which are commonly so called. But still there is a point in the teaching of Christ yet beyond this, which, though pervading more or less all the Gospels, is specially brought out in the Fourth. In that Gospel we see more clearly than anywhere else the subject round which all His teaching turns. It is not His precepts, or His doctrines, or His authority, or His acts, but HIMSELF. "This is the word of God, that ye should believe on Him whom He hath sent;" "I am the bread of life;" "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you;" "Ye believe in God, believe also in me;" "I am the way, the truth, and the life;" "I am the vine; ye are the branches." What are we to learn from these and many like passages?

I. What do they teach us about Him who spake them ? Taken by themselves, they would perhaps tell us but little. If there were nothing else recorded of Him, they might awe us by their majesty, they might confound us by their solemnity, but they might also leave on us only the impression which they left on the unbelieving Jews, that He who spoke was beside Himself in making claims so vast, in making Himself equal with God. But, taken in conjunction with the rest of His teaching, the conclusion is almost irresistible. On the one hand, the moral grandeur and purity of that general teaching (to say nothing of His actions) compel us to receive these exalted claims as the words of absolute truth and soberness, as demanding nothing more than He had a full, perfect, and sufficient right to demand. And on the other hand, the fact that He does so use them places an impassable gulf between Himself and any merely human teacher that has been, or that ever can be. Read these passages, place them in the mouth not only of any great philosopher, but in the mouth of Moses, of Isaiah, of Paul, of John, and what presumption would they imply

in the speaker ; what a disproportion, what an incongruity, what a poverty would they imply in the things spoken. No ; it has been truly said, "If Christ was no more than a Socrates, a Socrates He was not." We are on a higher level, we are in another atmosphere, in listening to Him. "We *believe* Moses, we *believe* Paul, but we *believe* IN *Christ*;" and we can *believe in* no one beside. He, above all great teachers and prophets, points to Himself as the ultimate object of His teaching ; and the fact that He, being what He was, did so point to Himself, is a proof that He, who was the subject of His teaching, is also the object of our belief and our worship.

II. And now what do we learn from the fact that this was the main subject of His teaching ? He does not say, "Believe in my doctrines," or "Believe in my commands ;" He does not say, "Believe in my life," or "Believe in my death ;" He does not say, "Believe in the sacraments," or "Believe in the preacher ;" He does not say, "Believe in your own holiness," or "Believe in your own salvation." He says, "BELIEVE IN ME." What

does this teach us? First, it teaches us what belief, what faith is. By figures of speech, indeed, we may be said to "believe in" many things, but, properly speaking, belief and faith can only be directed to a person — to a living, speaking, actual person, with a well-known character, on whom we can depend with perfect confidence. Every one knows what an elevation is given, even in earthly matters, by having some one beyond, above, beside ourselves, to whom we can look up, to whom we can trust, who will do what is best for us, for whose honour, and glory, and welfare we care more than we care for our own. What a calmness, what a resignation, what an unselfishness is produced by such a thought. How often do we see it in the faith of a wife in her husband, of a child in a parent, of a friend in a friend. This, on the highest scale, was the belief which Christ enjoined on His disciples; this is the belief which He enjoins on us. Again, we learn from this what is the chief value of all those other countless objects of religious awe, love, fear, which exist in the world and the Church. They are all means to an end, and that end is to give us a firmer and fuller belief in Christ. Viewed in

this way, how many disputes concerning them become superfluous or unimportant; how many errors become harmless or trivial. If this be the main object of the Scriptures, how well can we afford to be in doubt or in ignorance of many points that have no direct bearing on this great end. How well can we bear to be in suspense or in difficulty, so long as we hold this belief in Christ firm and steadfast. "I will not be afraid of any evil tidings, for my heart standeth fast, *and believeth in the Lord.*" If this be the main object of the Sacraments, how well can we be content to dismiss from our consideration the thousand questions which arise as to the mode in which Christ is thus made present to us; how well can we bear to deal gently with those who, equally with ourselves, though in different forms, seek this union with Christ as the end and aim of those sacred ordinances. How much had Peter yet to learn when he declared his belief in Christ and was accepted for it; how various must have been the feelings of the different Apostles, as they saw their Master break the bread and bless the cup; how imperfect, how fleeting, how confused must have been their impressions,

when He burst through the closed doors of the upper room, or suddenly appeared on the shore of the lake after His resurrection. Yet how closely they were bound to each other ; how ardently they longed after better things ; how true and how lofty were their views of life and death ! And why ? Because amidst these manifold varieties, errors, imperfections, shortcomings, misgivings, they yet had chosen this one thing needful, this one better part, — they had *believed in Christ*.

III. But finally, there arises this further question, most important of all. What did He mean, what did they mean, by *believing on Him*? The answer to this may be very long—no less than the whole statement of the Christian creed ; but it may also be very short and very simple. It is the belief in Christ, as He appears to us in the four Gospels. Last year I endeavoured to set before you what He is there described to be, for our imitation, in His character, His actions, His life, and His death. This year I again come round, at the close of His teaching, to the same point. The sum and substance of what He teaches us is, that

we shall be what He was and what He is, by union with Him, by faith in Him, by believing on Him whom God hath sent.

Let us not deceive ourselves. To believe in Christ is not simply to say "we believe in Him," it is to *believe in Him as He really is*. When He was actually on earth, the simple profession of belief in Him usually carried this with it. No one who saw that gracious presence, who heard those divine words, who fell under the glance of that penetrating eye, could say, "I believe in Him," unless to a great extent—to a sufficient extent—he understood what was the character, what was the person, in whom he professed belief. But now that we see Him no longer, now that He is far withdrawn from us, now that men are willing to use His name as an excuse for indolence, for self-conceit, for intolerance, for pride, for sin, the mere expression of belief in Christ no longer involves the same wide consequences that it did in the case of Peter, and Nathanael, and Thomas. True, even now there is a sacred and elevating influence conveyed in the mere sound of the name, and many may have, even now, a true faith in

Christ with a very imperfect knowledge of His actual character, even as prisoners and captives have carved on the walls of their dungeons the letters of His holy name, as if, it has been truly said, the very fact of writing it out was a support and consolation. But we know by experience that the name of Christ, the profession of belief in Him, may be used, even sincerely used, yet only as a charm—not as a Gospel, a “Good-spell” of light and life, but only as a “spell,” a “Bad-spell,” a “magic spell” of darkness and death.

Take two extreme cases to show what is meant. There is a famous drama in which a Spanish robber, who was in the practice of every crime which man can commit,—theft, murder, debauchery,—but who yet to the last maintained a hope that he was saved, because, in the midst of all those crimes, he never lost what was called, in the language of his country, “Devotion to the Cross of Christ.” Again, to come nearer home, there was a case of a well-known English murderer, not many years ago, who, having lived in the indulgence of foul passions and at last attempted to slaughter a whole household, yet never lost

the belief that he was one of the chosen of Christ ; and in the last days of his life wrote with unshaken assurance of hope, and marked underneath, for the benefit of his children, passages in a religious book which spoke of Christ as the Saviour, and of faith as the one thing needed for salvation.

These are two extreme cases, but they bring before us what in many shades and degrees is the danger of every one of us. They show us why it is that so many expressions of devotion, both in Protestant and Roman Catholic countries, are barren and useless. The Spanish robber and the English murderer both thought that they had a saving belief in Christ. Their belief was sincere, ardent, and constant ; but it was not a saving faith, because it was a belief only in the name of Christ, and not in Christ Himself,—in the wood and the name of the Cross, not in what the Cross teaches,—in words and phrases concerning Christ, not in the All-holy, All-pure, All-wise Lord who is revealed to us in the Bible. Let each one ask himself, when he relies on his belief in Christ, whether the Christ in whom he so believes is indeed the Christ of whom we read in the

Gospel—the true, the just, the gentle, the holy ; whether the Gospel to which he listens with delight is truly the Gospel according to S. Matthew and S. Mark, the Gospel according to S. Luke, the Gospel according to S. John. For, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, . . . but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven,” — not every one that believes in the name of Christ, but he that believes in the perfect truth and holiness which Christ is, “shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.”¹ Most evangelical, most Christian, was the well-known saying of a great Archbishop who sleeps within these walls², that “he who dies for the cause of justice and truth, even without regard to the name of Christ, is yet a true martyr for Christ, who *is* truth and justice.” Most evangelical, most Christian, was the judgment of those ancient Fathers³, who maintained that even the pious Jew or the pious heathen, living before Christ came, might truly deserve the name of “Christian,” and be said to have the Christian faith, if in their measure they did, beforehand, the things which He enjoined,—if they lifted up their

¹ Matt. vii. 2. ² S. Anselm. ³ Eusebius, H. E. i. 5.

minds to the world beyond this world, waiting for the great Deliverer. "Verily I say unto you, many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."¹

But, even if such imperfect apprehensions of Christ are thus mighty, even if before He came such anticipations were thus powerful "to work the work of God," how much more the full belief in Him now that He has come, and is known to us in all His height, and length, and depth, and breadth. Believe in Christ as He is and was; believe in Him as His first disciples believed in Him; believe in His essential and everlasting attributes; believe in His truth, His righteousness, His love, His willingness and His power to redeem us from sin and evil; believe in Him, as He shows us the nature of God; believe in Him, as He shows us the duty of man. This is indeed "the work of God," this is indeed "the victory that overcometh the world."

We sometimes hear it said that the ages of faith are over, that the age in which we live is not, and cannot be, an age of true, fervent,

¹ Matt. viii. 11.

sincere belief. My brethren, have we ever tried? Has the world in our time, has the Church of our time, has the religious world of our time, tried the effect of preaching, and teaching, and putting into action the ancient Evangelical belief in Jesus Christ our Lord?

It was said by an old philosopher, "If thou couldst see the very form and face of Goodness, it would excite within thee a love of itself almost inconceivable." May it not be said with truth that if we could set before ourselves, before the world, before the people of England, the very form and face of Him who is indeed Goodness incarnate, it would excite a love, a zeal, a union, and energy, which we could now hardly imagine? There would still be disbelief, there would still be disunion, there would still be persecution, disbelief more dark, disunion more bitter, persecution more savage, perhaps, than has been since the time when that divine Image was first shown to the bigotry of the Jewish and the profligacy of the heathen world. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Yes, this might be; this will be till the

end of all things. But the faith in Christ's love, the faith in Christ's holiness, the faith in Christ's authority, the faith in Christ's mercy, has a power to unite good men, to attract all men, to disarm bad men, to encourage weak men, to soften hard men, to convince doubting men, beyond any other faith that has ever yet appeared. What moral exhortations fail to effect from their weakness, what appeals to the feelings fail to effect from their hollowness, what abstract speculations fail to effect from their difficulty, that we may humbly hope to gain from the union of all in the belief in the Living Person of Christ. "Ye believe in God;" ye believe that He makes the sun rise and set, that the seasons will go round in their courses, that harvests will spring up, that winter will go and summer will return. "Ye believe in God,"—"Believe also in Christ." Believe, and show by your lives how you believe, that only by being like to Him are you brought near to God. Apprehend, appropriate — "put on" — "the mind," the actual, original, undoubted mind, "that was in Christ Jesus." Believe, trust in Him, as the Friend and Saviour of sinners, who, out of the

deepest distress, can give "all joy and peace in believing," because He calls us to communion and peace with God through Himself; because He can save with that only salvation which the Scriptures ascribe to Him, from sin, from the world, from ourselves.

[To have continued these Discourses into the detailed examples of the Evangelical teaching, would have been inconsistent with their introductory and general character. But one such example, it was thought, would not be out of place; — especially in illustration of what has been already said in Sermons II. and IV. For these reasons I have inserted the following Sermon, preached, as will be seen, on another occasion to a different congregation.]

SERMON VIII.

THE WISDOM OF CHRIST.

(PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, ON THE
TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, 1858.)



MATT. XXII. 20—22.

He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

THESE words contain a peculiarly characteristic example of our Saviour's mode of teaching, and a profound evangelical principle, applicable to all religious study and instruction.

I. He is at Jerusalem, He is in the temple. Thither the best and the worst of the nation

were gathered together. All the sects, leaders and followers, were there, bent on their several ends. All the people were there, filled with the one impulse which swayed every Jewish heart at the time of the great festival of the Passover. In the midst of them stood One, who was amongst them but not of them ; with His own end clear before Him, an end for which He came to bear witness, and for which He was born into the world, but an end which soared above the highest imagination of those who were gathered around Him and were seeking to make Him their own. He is to cross their path shortly in a still higher path, and to a still higher end. But now He crosses them in turn, one by one, as a Teacher, and the first and most striking example is that contained in the text. Two of the great sections of the Jewish church and nation approach. They are the Pharisees and Herodians. They have contended for years on one, as it seemed to them, all important question : “ Was it the duty of the chosen people to submit to the Roman yoke, or to resist?—were they to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?” Everything

presented itself to them through that medium. To determine the question on the one side or the other was the great need, which they both sought to supply. There was no escape, as they supposed, from one or other of the two horns of this dilemma ; on one or other their victim must be transfixed ; on one or other they must receive satisfaction.

It was exactly in this very confidence that they were both disappointed. What they had said with a dim perception of the character which they only partially understood, was the very rock and corner stone on which they stumbled and were crushed. "The Master" whom they approached "was" indeed "*true*, and taught the way of God *in truth* ; neither did He care for any man, for He regarded not the person of men." He, the great questioner of mankind, the true discoverer of hearts, burst through this haze of self-illusion, by the same methods (humanly speaking) as that ancient catechiser, the father of human philosophy, had done before Him in the market-place of Athens. He met them with a searching question and with a homely fact : "Why tempt ye me, ye Hypocrites? Show

me the tribute money." From wide-reaching theories, from hopes of accomplished vengeance, from dreams of successful intrigues, they were brought down, as were the sophists of old, to gather round a small, solid, indisputable fact. We know the appearance of that fact even now. It has been often described; it may still be seen,—the little silver coin, bearing on its surface the head encircled with a wreath of laurel and bound round with the sacred fillet—the well-known features, the most beautiful and the most wicked, even in outward expression, of all the Roman Emperors — with the superscription running round, in the stately language of Imperial Rome, "*Tiberius Cæsar, divi Augusti filius Augustus, Imperator.*" He looked on the face, He looked on the inscription; as the coin lay on the outstretched palm of His tempters. He asked again, with that same art of the master of ancient irony, "Whose is this image and superscription?" "They say unto Him" (they could not but say unto Him) the Imperial name, "It is Cæsar's." "Then saith He unto them, 'Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and to God the

things that are God's.'” The distinction which they had tried to draw between the two conflicting duties vanished away in those words, drawn from a higher than any earthly source. What was due to Cæsar could not be taken from God; what was due to God could not be taken from Cæsar: by giving to Cæsar the things of Cæsar, the things that are God's are also given to God; by rendering to God the things that are God's, the things of Cæsar are also given to Cæsar.

Their snare, so skilfully laid on the right hand and on the left, had broken down. He had passed unmoved through the midst of their scholastic distinctions, as He passed unharmed through the midst of the raging multitude. Their serried ranks had opened before Him. A third course of which they had not dreamed was *His* natural path. Pharisee and Herodian alike were defeated. He was above and beside and beyond their mark,—“They marvelled, and left him, and went their way.”

II. Before we look at the meaning of the words in detail, let us for a few moments pause

on the general lesson that it conveys, both as to the mind which was in Christ Jesus and as to our imitation of it. Of all the incidents in the Gospel History, there is perhaps none which brings out more fully the most individual peculiarity (so to speak) of His doctrine and character. It is what has been condensed by a celebrated Christian philosopher of another country into one pregnant word, more suggestive than many elaborate expositions, and which our less complex language is unable to render by any single expression, "Schicksal-losigkeit;" — freedom from the control of destiny, elevation above the level of the fate, the circumstance, the age, in which all around Him were enveloped. They, all wrapt in the narrow folds of their own controversies, parties, systems,—they, all moving, as by a tragical irresistible doom, to the destruction which awaited their church and commonwealth; He, sweeping through and beside and athwart all these, with a loneliness of purpose and aim, which cost Him His life as He passed onward through the opposing obstacles,—dying in the conflict, yet rising triumphant out of it,

over fate, and death, and the grave. It is this part of His course which, above all others, is in one sense inimitable ;—which brings us so near to the source from whence He came, that the Example almost vanishes from our view in the distance from which we contemplate it.

Yet it is to be imitated, or, if we cannot imitate it, we can at least fix our eyes on the perfection which it holds forth before us. We are all of us, old and young, beset more or less by the sophistries, the systems, the schools, the parties, which time and circumstance, which past ages or our own age, have cast up around us and beside us, before us and behind us. We are involved in their meshes, we walk in the grooves which they have made for us. To a great extent we cannot, perhaps we ought not to move out of them. To many of us it is a duty to go on as we have begun, walking round and round our own small circles, seeing only but a short way in advance, thinking much of what lies close before us, little of what lies beyond us. Yet still there is an encouragement and consolation in the thought, that none of these

things of themselves constitute the whole, or the essence, of Christianity; that in this respect our Lord is still the pattern of His Church. The true Creed of the Church, the true Gospel of Christ, is to be found, not in proportion as it coincides with the watchwords or the dilemmas of modern controversy, but rather in proportion as it rises above them, and cuts across them. How often we are told that we must be either Pharisees or Herodians; that we must consistently follow everything to its logical extreme; that with every one with whom we agree in something we must also agree in everything; that we cannot believe anything unless we believe everything, or that we cannot doubt anything without doubting everything; that we must accept or reject institutions, characters, systems, whole or not at all! These are some of the temptations which from opposite sides have in every age beset the course of the student of Christian theology, as of old they beset the course of his Divine Master. But there is a "right division of the word of truth"—there is a true middle way of religion, which not from weakness, not from indolence, not from halting

between two opinions, but from sincere love of Christ, and from desire to conform ourselves to His image, we may humbly desire to walk. There is still a way of resisting the mechanical arguments which would force us to rank ourselves with the extreme right of the Pharisees, or the extreme left of the Herodians. "Master," so let us speak with all humility and sincerity the words which they spoke with insincerity, "Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man, for thou regardest not the person of man." The very peculiarity, the very proof of the divinity of His doctrine, was that they could not square it with any of their existing systems. It was with His doctrine, as it was in the legendary tale which describes how the tree of the wood of the True Cross had been of old rejected, because it would not fit into the building of the ancient temple. It was too long for one corner, it was too short for another, it was too narrow for a third, it was too broad for another; and so it was laid aside till it came forth at last to be the means and symbol of the world's redemption. So are

we, as we endeavour to fix in our straitened earthly tabernacles the pattern of the heavenly. On the way to our Father's house, no less than in our Father's house, are many "mansions"—many halting-places. None of us can embrace at a glance the whole of Christian truth. Inconsistencies, incongruities will be found in every system, and in every view. It is this our own imperfection which is to us a sure pledge that the truth of Christ will not be lost in the ruin of any human school. It was before them, it will live after them. And it is both a confirmation and illustration of this character of Evangelical doctrine, that, if we look into some of the earthly representations of it which have met with most universal acceptance, they also share in this freedom from the bonds in which the world is anxious to confine us. Take the expressions of the highest genius, when it has turned itself to moral or religious matters. Who will venture to name the party, or the sect, to which it belongs? Who will venture to fix the exact theological place of the Analogy and Sermons of Butler? What special school will be willing or able to close its doors against Francis Bacon? Not

because their genius is irreligious, not because it is weak and faltering. No ; but because it transcends the limits of our ordinary thoughts, because it approaches by another way to something like the loftiness of Him, whose image and superscription it bears. Or ask why it is that we repose with such "quietness and confidence" in the language of our ancient prayers? Is it not, because, by the mere fact of their antiquity, of their elevation above the point where modern divergences have had their rise, we are transported into a region in which our temporary distractions have no place ; and thus when we clothe our thoughts and hopes in their primitive language, we are in fact lifting up our eyes to the mountains, above the stir of town and plain, the everlasting mountains, "whence cometh our help"? Or go into the cottages of the poor. How directly do their simple rough words find an entrance to our hearts ! How unconsciously, yet how keenly, do they cut the knots which we have been ravelling and unravelling till we know not where to begin, or where to end ! What a stream of wisdom and of faith do they pour into our minds, the more welcome, the

more instructive, because it comes fresh from the native rock, new and yet old,—the very thing which we feel ourselves, and labour in vain to express.

No ; it is not among the uneducated, nor yet amongst the well-educated, but amongst the half-educated, and the ill-educated, and the over-educated, that the springs of bitterness rise which poison the Christian life. In the spirit of the poor and humble, in the spirit of the ancient Church, in the highest works of human genius, a ready response is made to the words of the Bible, and the Spirit of Christ —amidst even the most untoward generation. And how naturally ought this same freedom to fall in with the spirit of the youthful student ! None can better afford to be content with the self-control imposed by the wisdom and moderation of the Gospel, than those who have still the whole field of life before them. How many hours, and days, and years would have been spared from waste !—what promise of future usefulness might have been saved from utter ruin, if we had all of us always remembered that the growing mind cannot be treated as the mind full grown ; that the

errors (if we choose to call them by so grave a name), the opinions of youth, are usually but as passing clouds, to be treated gently, kindly, lightly, not hardly, severely, or seriously; that modesty and self-possession now are the best pledges of energy and decision hereafter. "*Nondum,*" *Not yet,* was most fitly the youthful motto of the same great prince whose device in later life was *Forward*; "*Plus ultra.*"

III. So much we might learn from the text, even without entering into it in detail. The question was put to Him, not sincerely, but "tempting Him," and therefore (in one sense) the answer was no answer at all. He took them in their own craftiness; He dealt with them as God ever deals with insincere inquirers, with onesided and unfair search after truth—He silenced without instructing them: He went upon his own lofty course without deigning to decide a mere local and temporary controversy. But as there was something in the question of more than transient interest, so there was in the answer something more than a mere rebuke to obstinate and pre-

judiced minds, a Wisdom even beyond that Divine Indifference, if we may so term it, which I have just ventured to describe.

Insincere as the question was, yet the very fact of putting it at all, the marvel with which they received the answer, shows that they who put it believed it to be a great perplexity, and that their own solution would have been widely different. The Pharisees, in the excess of their religious zeal, could not imagine that any one professing to be a religious teacher could recognise the authority of a heathen power. The Herodians, in the excess of their worldly prudence, could not imagine that any one could share that prudence except those who shared their own worldly spirit. The possibility of an answer which should unite the two had never occurred to either of them for a moment. To each of these opposite frames of mind, our Lord's reply conveyed a lesson of universal truth. The image and superscription told them with indisputable clearness to what government they owed allegiance, and to what great power they owed the unexampled peace, which had now for thirty years reigned through the

civilised world. Into any further questions He entered not. Whether that government were heathen or Jewish ; whether its blessings were combined with dark idolatries or pure faith, was not now the point ;—it could not alter the facts of the case, as acknowledged by themselves ; and, *therefore*, that union of respect to the authority of Cæsar and the authority of God, which Pharisee and Herodian alike thought impossible, He pronounced to be possible and necessary. “ Render, *therefore*, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” Though the government of Rome was despotic, and they had once been free ; though the worship of Rome was heathen, and they were the chosen people of Jehovah ; though Tiberius Cæsar was stained with crime and tyranny, and they were the guardians of the highest morality of mankind ; yet, if there was anything due to him by their own acknowledgment and confession, anything which was duly his on the natural principles of right and justice, they were to render it back to him ; and in that very act they were rendering it back to God. Their relation to God

did not, as the zealots of that day affirmed, dissolve their prior, independent obligations to men; it confirmed them and enjoined them. So taught our Saviour Christ, and so taught his Apostles afterwards. From the first teaching of John the Baptist to the last epistle of S. Paul, Cæsar always received from the early Christian Church the things that were Cæsar's. The Roman soldiers were not commanded to leave the Imperial army, but only to discharge their duties more faithfully.¹ The Roman magistrate, surrounded as he was by the emblems of heathenism, was regarded as the minister of God.² The Roman emperor, though he were a Tiberius, a Caligula, or a Nero, was still remembered in the prayers of Christian assemblies.³ The Roman slave was not enjoined to break his yoke and join with the barbarians of the north and east in the overthrow of his masters, but rather in the state of life in which he was called to abide with God.⁴ The Roman usages of the triumphal procession, of the amphitheatre, of the soldier's panoply, were employed to point

¹ Luke iii. 14.

² Rom. xiii. 4.

³ 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

⁴ 1 Cor. vii. 21. 24.

the sacred allusions of the Apostle's writings.¹ To have been born a Roman citizen, and to exercise the rights of Roman citizenship, were privileges in which the Apostle of the Gentiles gloried and rejoiced.² In the very words almost of his Divine Master he summed up the duties of his converts, — "Render unto all their due : tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour."³ All these things were Cæsar's, and to Cæsar they were cheerfully given ; because the Apostles knew that the facts of the case demanded it ; that the great institutions of the world were not to be overturned but renewed by their means ; that by so doing they were giving "to God the things that were God's."

It is important to dwell for a moment on these relations of the early Church to the Roman Empire, before they were embittered by the persecutions, and distorted by the exaggerations of the next two centuries ; whilst they still bore unaltered the stamp of calmness

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 9 ; 2 Cor. ii. 14 ; Eph. vi. 14-17.

² Acts xvi. 37, xxii. 28, xxv. 10.

³ Rom. xiii. 7.

and soberness impressed upon them by Christ Himself. But we must remember that our Lord's words contain not only a judgment on the past, but a guiding principle for the present and future. The Roman Empire has crumbled away, and the perplexity occasioned by the Roman tribute has long since been laid to sleep. But again and again have religious men, in fear or in prejudice, shrunk from acknowledging the indisputable claims of the great facts and powers of the world, because they did not fall in with their own notions, or because they seemed to clash with revelation, or because they were united with qualities justly abhorred. Again and again have worldly men gladly believed the cry and taken us at our word, and maintained that religious truth and goodness have a sphere of their own, beyond which they may not step — that (to use the bitter words of Gibbon, who knew too well how to make use of such an admission) “in *this* world Christians have no pleasures and no duties.” It is in answer to both these frames of mind that the reconciling, healing reply of the Great Reconciler has its perpetual value.

There is indeed a struggle, a never-ending struggle, to be maintained against the world, in that darker sense, in which the Apostle S. John spoke of it, as lying in sin and falsehood : there is a heavy sacrifice to be demanded from all those who have the courage to speak and to act and to think, not as the many or the mighty think and speak, nor as pleasure and interest require. Such a contest, more or less severe, is, or ought to be, in store for all of us. But let us not increase the difficulties of this contest by means of our own devising — let us thankfully remember that in our enjoyment of this world's power, and truth, and beauty, no less than in the burning fiery furnace of resistance to its evil, there is Another walking with us, and His form is like unto the Son of God. It is the same lesson which He speaks still more distinctly in other parts of the gospel. "Judge not according to the offence, but judge righteous judgment." "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."¹ It is the religious sanction to those general principles of truth and justice, planted in the

¹ John vii. 24, viii. 32.

human heart and conscience, which in the name of religion have been often disregarded; but which the Gospel expressly seeks to identify with religion, and to sanctify with the name and the spirit of Christ.

(1.) "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." Render — (so we may first apply it to subjects which our studies inevitably force upon our notice) render to those old heathen times of which we are taught to think and read so much, render to them the praise and honour which is really theirs. Render it, not covertly, furtively, timidly—as though it were a condemned, contraband, suspected concession. Render it openly, fearlessly, religiously, as the doctrine of Him who has told us how He will call the nations before His throne, and render to each according to their good and evil works¹: as the doctrine of the Apostle who has told us, that when the Gentiles who have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves, and show the work of the law written on their hearts²; as the doctrine of the early Fathers, who have

Matt. xxv. 32. 40. 45.

² Rom. ii. 14.

told us that the heathen sages and heroes lived and taught by the inspiration of the spirit of Christ.

(2.) Render their due,—if to the heathen, then still more the nearer due,—whatever it be, to all those whom we condemn, or who condemn us, in the thousand varieties of opinion which intersect the nations and churches of Christendom. Render them their due, not as though it were extorted by a too liberal age, or languidly yielded by indifference or vacillation or indolence; but render it as the sacred offering of Christian justice and the express command of Him who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Bear it about as His special desire, that justice and mercy and faith are to be kept even with heretics, even with those who think us heretics. Remember that in this world, where the evil is ever mingled with the good, the good, whatever it be, has its claim on our imitation and admiration, whatever be the evil whereby it is surrounded. Condemn not the wheat because it grows amongst the tares. Hold up to all honour, even as our Master did, the noble deeds even of a Samaritan outcast. To many

institutions, to many men in the Christian Church, may be applied, in a measure, what was said most truly of one most famous Order, "Ubi bene, nemo melius; ubi male, nemo pejus." Let us not do wrong to God or to the Church by refusing to acknowledge either the good of that which has been done so well, or the evil of that which has been done so ill. Render to all their due, even though the image they bear is that of the hateful Tiberius, even though the sword, which they now wield "not in vain, for good," be destined in the next generation to strike down the Apostles of Christ. And think not that by rendering these things to Cæsar we are taking away anything from God, who is the giver of all good gifts, whether to Jew or heathen, who is the fountain of all goodness and of all wisdom, whether in the orthodox or the heretic. Give to the very worst his due, and you are but giving it back to God, the just, the merciful, the wise. On the very throne of Tiberius Cæsar, in the very catalogue of persecuted heretics, have arisen those whom the true faith and wisdom of the Church has since delighted to revere and to canonise as saints in Paradise.

(3.) "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." May we not extend the words yet further, to express the Evangelical principle implied in other parts of the Gospels? Render to Fact, to Truth, to Reason those things which Fact and Truth and Reason, by an imperial sway, more certainly acknowledged than that of Cæsar, require at our hands. Render to Art, to Nature, to Science, the conclusions which they have fairly won; render to them the honours with which God has invested them by planting on their front that image and superscription of Himself which none can see and doubt. Render this too again, not grudgingly or of necessity, but as remembering that here also God loveth the cheerful giver. Whenever we can lay our finger or plant our foot on an acknowledged fact, in nature, or in language, or in history, cling to it, cherish it, honour it as a fragment of the Truth on which we all repose. It may be small and homely in itself as the silver penny of Cæsar's tribute; it may seem contrary, as that did, to all preconceived opinions; but nevertheless, if it be a fact, stand by it, not in the name only of science or philosophy,

but in the name of God, and in the name of Christ—stand by it, without fear or wavering, well assured that thereby we are doing, not dishonour but honour to the Master “who, we know, is true, and who teaches the way of God in truth, and who regards not the person of man.” Remember the often repeated story how easily religion has been able to spare the concessions which she has already made to fact and science. Was it the majestic order of the new Copernican system, or the endless cycles and epicycles of the old Ptolemaic system, which made the royal sceptic of the middle ages (Alfonso the Wise) utter the profane doubt, that if he had been concerned in the creation of the world, he could have made it better? Have the Hebrew Scriptures suffered in authority by those various readings which in the last century roused such a tempest of alarm and invective against their discoverers? Is the true meaning of the Old Testament, its pathos, its poetry, its wisdom, better or worse understood since the advance of a critical study of all its various parts? Has the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity lost or gained by the universal abandonment of the spurious verse

of the Three Witnesses? There are a thousand points such as these which we may thus safely surrender to Cæsar. They either have no concern with God at all, or so far as they have any concern with Him, He freely gives them us; we have freely received them from Him, and may freely give them to those whose tribute they are.

(4.) And not in speculation only, but in practice, have Fact and Reason an imperial demand on our religious obedience. Render to Prudence, to Wisdom, to Common Sense their due. How many of our controversies need for their remedy, not theological learning, not ancient precedents, not popular agitation, not sounding watchwords, but a few grains of common prudence, a single spark of good sense and discretion. O let us not doubt, but earnestly believe, that Common Sense is more than a mere worldly virtue. It is a Christian, nay (with all reverence be it spoken), a truly Christlike grace. See how it was practised by Him on this occasion. Remember that it is the very characteristic of His answer, that it took the plain, homely, straightforward view of an intricate and dif-

difficult case. He who, amidst all other names, is called "Wisdom," "the Eternal Wisdom of God," did not disdain—nor should we, His scholars, His disciples, disdain—to be wise in that simple wisdom described in the book of Proverbs, whence the name was given to Him, —"to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity," "to give to the young man knowledge and discretion."

IV. Let us turn for a moment, before concluding, to the other part of the precept: "Render unto God the things that be God's." The stress, no doubt, is laid on the first part, and as such I have dwelt upon it at greater length. But in fact, the full understanding of the first part carries with it the understanding of the second also. If the claims of Cæsar, if the claims of the world, if the natural demands of justice, truth, reason, and common sense, are not incompatible with the claims of God, this is of itself the best instance of the doctrine that neither are the claims of God incompatible with them. "Render unto God the things that be God's," and you will truly "render unto Cæsar the things that be

Cæsar's." The moderation, the calmness, the healing, reconciling effect of the words of Christ and His Apostles, even in this single instance, is a pledge to us that we may well believe and trust in them elsewhere. It is a pledge to us that we need not abandon the common principles of sense, and justice, and love of truth, by devoting ourselves to the service of God ;— nay, rather it is a pledge that only by lending to those homely, yet noble gifts, the impulse, the sanction, the zeal of religion, will they ever take their proper place in the world, or in the Church. This pledge our Lord has given us—this it is which makes His union of the two spheres, on this and on so many other occasions, of such infinite moment to us and to all men. Far asunder as the two have often been parted, they were united once, and they may, if God have mercy upon us, be united yet again hereafter. And when we think how far astray in former ages, and in ages not so long ago, the Christian Church has been led in the name of religion, is it not possible to hope that the same faith and zeal which cast a glow over the hard heart of old intolerance, may kindle

the hard heart of modern indifference?— that justice, and equity, and truth, may furnish forth the works, not of a cold philosophy, but of an ardent Christian penitence, a repentance, “a godly sorrow,” striving, even in excess, to make up for the scandals and the miseries of the past? If we dwell on the records of our ancient shortcomings, “what carefulness” ought it to work in us,—“yea, what clearing of ourselves,—yea, what indignation,—yea, what fear,—yea, what vehement desire,—yea, what revenge”¹ upon ourselves, to repair the mischief of ages past in generations yet to come; fearing, as in the sight of God, to make a man an offender for a word; fearing, as in the name of Christ, to darken counsel by words without knowledge; eager, as in the light of His Spirit, to receive even unpalatable truth, and to reject even welcome fictions.

“Render unto God the things that are God’s.” Render the things that are truly God’s, and not those things which are *not* His — not the opinions or fancies in or about such things which we have made for ourselves, or which others have made for us. Let the truth speak

¹ 2 Cor. vii. 11.

for itself. Do not lay on the Church, but above all, do not lay on the Bible, do not lay on the Gospel, the charge and the burden of scruples and difficulties which are but as the inventions of yesterday. Render to God — to Christ — to the Scriptures — render to the doctrines of true Christian theology — the sense and the wisdom which are really theirs. Render to them their own pure gold, as it was when it was not become dim, their own most fine gold, not yet changed by wear and tear, and rust, and counterfeit; render these faithfully and gratefully where they are due, and we may then be sure that Cæsar and Cæsar's things will never suffer. "I see that all things come to an end"—there is a limitation, a partiality, a narrowness in all besides—"But Thy commandment is exceeding broad." "Thou shalt hide me secretly in Thy presence from the provoking of all men: Thou shalt keep me secretly in Thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues."

SERMON IX.

CHRIST'S WORDS TO THE APOSTLE PAUL.

(CONVERSION OF S. PAUL, 1857.)

(Addressed chiefly to the Schools connected with Canterbury Cathedral,
and in behalf of Schools in the City.)



ACTS xxi. 7, 8.

And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? and he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest.

WE reached last Sunday the close of our consideration of Christ's teaching in the Gospels. Was His voice ever heard again? If so, was it the same as that to which we have been hitherto listening? Let the event which this day commemorates answer the question. Months, perhaps years, had passed away since

He had been withdrawn from the eyes of His disciples. A troop of horsemen were approaching the great city of Damascus,—beyond the limits of the Holy Land. The sun was high in the mid-day heavens,—the glorious city, embosomed in its forest of verdure, was close in view,—the journey was all but accomplished;—when suddenly a blaze of light, brighter even than the splendour of an Eastern noon, burst around them,—they fell on their faces to the ground,—all were terrified,—all heard a sound;—one only, gazing at that depth of light, saw, as he afterwards tells us, a gracious countenance bent upon him, before his eyes were closed in darkness, and heard words, distinct, articulate words, in the Hebrew tongue, which remained for evermore graven on his mind. The form, the vision, whatever it was, is withdrawn from us,—we see it no more. But the words can still be read. Thrice over they are repeated in the sacred narrative. We know the immense effect they produced on the life of that traveller to Damascus, and, through him, on the life of the world. Were they, let us humbly ask, what we should have

expected them to be, as coming from Him whom afterwards the Apostle preached? Do they contain some new doctrine, or are they the very same in spirit and substance as those which, in the same Hebrew tongue, were spoken by the same Divine Lord on the shores of the sea of Galilee,—in the courts of the Temple of Jerusalem?

They are the very same. He heard a voice saying, "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*" And he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" And the answer came, "*I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest.*"

We see at once that this is the very truth which, almost in the same words, Christ Himself again and again conveys in the Gospels. "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me; but whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for a millstone to be hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; . . . whosoever shall give unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in

“nowise lose his reward.” And in His description of the last great day, when He shall divide the sheep from the goats, still the same question and answer, which were heard in the road to Damascus, are continued. “I was “an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was “thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a “stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and “ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and “ye visited me not.” And, like Saul, they answer Him, saying, “Lord, when saw we “thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, “or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not “minister unto thee?” Then shall He answer them: “Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as “ye did it not unto the least of these my “brethren, ye did it not unto me.”¹

I have dwelt on these words to the Apostle, first, because their likeness to those in the Gospels is a living witness to the truth of his conversion—a proof that in hearing them the Apostle received no mere invention of his own mind—but a message, however conveyed to him, of Jesus Christ. And se-

¹ Matt. x. 40, 41; xviii. 5, 6; xxv. 42—45.

condly, because it is the very truth which most was needed after the removal of our Lord from amongst us; the very truth which in fact the Apostle most earnestly enforced everywhere. Christ is gone, but we remain; in us, and in our brethren,—in the weak, in the ignorant, in the suffering, in the persecuted, in the young, in the little ones of His flock, He is still present to be served or neglected, honoured or persecuted. To serve them, is to serve Him,—to injure them, is to injure Him. They are (He Himself, through His Apostle, has allowed us to call them so), they are “His body, His members, of His flesh, and of His bone.”¹ In them,—whatever has in later times been said about the mode of His Presence elsewhere,—in them, the Scriptures solemnly assure us, is contained His “Real Presence.”

In many ways we have need to remember this; but on this day I will chiefly address myself to the application suggested, first, by the sight of the special congregation which I see before me; secondly, by the purpose for which I have to ask for your help.

¹ Eph. v. 30.

I. First, as I look round the younger part of my hearers, especially when, as on this day, the return of so many of them has again filled our numbers, it is impossible not to feel how important for them, even beyond any other class that could be addressed, is the truth contained in our Lord's words. There is no class where Christ can be so faithfully served, or so cruelly persecuted, in the persons of His little ones, as amongst boys at school. That is to say, there is no class where goodness is so easily put down, or on the other hand, where goodness is so easily encouraged, as by the ill-treatment on the one hand, or the kindness on the other hand, of older and stronger school-fellows. And there is no class which is so apt to inflict this great injury in ignorance, in carelessness, in wantonness, and which, therefore, needs so constantly to be reminded of its great wickedness. On them especially is laid the charge (surely not prematurely serious) to abstain by word, or deed, from offending, from misleading, from annoying your younger and weaker brethren. You who take a part in the services of this Cathedral,—you who

live at your own homes in this town, but are brought together in school and here in church,—you who spend so large a part of your whole time at school, away from your own friends and relations,—you, our own scholars, lately entered amongst us, and now about to begin to find your course of duty, of pleasure, of responsibility: listen for a few moments to what I say;—addressed with greater truth to some, than to others, but needed, in a great measure, by all. You are all for many hours of every day brought together,—often no one has any control over you, except yourselves;—your own characters, the characters, the happiness of yourselves and your companions are almost in your own hands to make or to mar. Think of those who thus come among you for the first time; remember the day when you yourselves first came to school, first left your homes, first found yourselves amongst strange faces, loud voices, rough hands,—it may be foul words and wicked deeds. Think of these now, as you were then; think of the inspiriting, cheering effect which a kind act or look would have had on you, and will now

have on them; think, on the other hand, of the hardening, chilling, brutalising effect of thoughtless cruelty, of cold indifference, and you will have some notion of the immense force with which Christ's words apply to you, entreating you to remember that "whoso receiveth one of these little ones kindly, receiveth Him;" that "whoso causeth one of these little ones to offend, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." We may, I trust, thankfully believe that those savage stories of boyish tyranny and cruelty, which were only too common thirty or fifty years ago, are now rare. Still there is always the danger, there is always the thoughtlessness; and if only one young boy could be saved from harm, if only one older boy could be roused to a keener sense of his power and of his duty, in this respect, these words would not be thrown away. From how many a tender little heart, from how many a tearful eye, from how many a tortured frame, from how many a crushed spirit, from how many a wounded conscience, struggling to keep itself pure amidst tempta-

tions and difficulties, has gone forth, out of the schools of this country, the bitter agonising cry, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And how often has the answer come back, not in the serious, anxious spirit of the Apostle, but in the hardened carelessness of the first murderer Cain, "Who art thou, Lord?" "Am I my brother's keeper?" (so we almost recall what has been said, or figure to ourselves what might be said) "Who is this little one, for whom such a cry should be made? What matters it that he should go through what all go through, what signify those sorrowful tears, why think of those pains which are but sport to us? Why should he not bear all the hardships of school, why should he not see and join in all the secrets of sin?" So I doubt not have answered many and many in former times, who have been the curse of their generation, whom their companions will have long remembered years and years after, with loathing and with horror, as their persecutors, their tempters, their destroyers. Such, I trust, there are none now amongst those who are here assembled. Yet bear with me, if I urge

you to consider whether you do as much as you might, whether you enough remember that what is sport to you may be death to them; whether you enough regard this protection of your young companions, both at home and at school, as a sacred, religious, everlasting duty.

“God,” we are told, “tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.” Do you take part with Him in that gracious work? In the hours of loneliness and desolation, which so often befall the new comers into large schools, like those I see before me, do what you can to temper that bitter wind to those shorn lambs. When you see the rough blow descending, when you hear the harsh word exploding, in wantonness or in anger or in tyranny, check it, avert it, put it down with that high hand which none will venture to gainsay or to resist, when they see why you so act. When here in church you see or hear the attempt to entangle yourselves and others in acts and words, unworthy of the sacredness and solemnity of this place, stop them, as you often can at once stop them, by turning a deaf ear, or an unmoved silence to these trifling and wicked tempta-

tions. If any one is so base or so cruel as to try to hinder or ridicule any one who is striving to do his duty, to say his prayers, to speak the truth, do what in you lies to express your scorn, your disgust at the one, your respect, your admiration of the other. Remember that in all these things it is Jesus Christ whom you serve. This duty, this privilege, let me rather call it, of protecting the weak, of saving the innocent, of guiding the doubtful, of keeping down and driving away the tempter and the persecutor, this is, or ought to be, the very Religion of school-boys. To this office, you, by your age, your situation, your power, your opportunities, are called by God Himself, as surely as He called the Apostle Paul to bear His name and to suffer for His name's sake before the kings and nations of the earth.

II. And now for ourselves, the elder members of this congregation,—are there any little ones of Christ especially left to our charge in this place, in whom we too, in our measure, can serve or neglect our Lord Jesus Christ,—any hungry or thirsty in spirit, to whom we

can do any good, and by doing good to them, do it unto Him ?

Over and above our universal obligations, or the duty which some of us owe to those immediately under their charge—speaking generally of those in this congregation who are connected with no special parish or school—it is strictly true that the poorest, the most desolate parts of the city, those that have no one within their own immediate neighbourhood to assist them, have a right to look to us for help, and we are under a bounden duty to help them. From them a voice cries, saying, “Saul, Saul, why neglectest thou me ?”—in them is still to be found Jesus of Nazareth, the despised, rejected Nazarene, of the rough village “from which no good thing could come.” Such a neighbourhood, you all know, is that in which are situated these schools for which I ask your aid. It is a satisfaction to be able to speak, not as is often the case on these occasions, for institutions of which one knows little oneself to congregations which know less ; but for an institution of the usefulness of which the preacher is convinced from personal knowledge, and of which

you need not many words to be convinced likewise. It needs only to walk a few hundred paces, and look at the schools of which I speak, to be sure that whatever support has been given, or may be given, will not be thrown away. Look at the rough alleys, and lanes, and houses around them, and then look at the children within the school enclosure. Look at those who have just come in, and observe their wild, shaggy, almost savage appearance, and then look at those who have been there for the year, since the schools were opened, and observe their neatness, their cleanliness, their attention. Remember that of those who first entered, many could neither read nor write ;— look now at their writing and hear their lessons, and remember that through these schools only could they have acquired this knowledge, to us so natural that we can hardly imagine not having it, so inestimable, that we may well take shame to ourselves, if, from our neglect, any man, woman, or child in this city shall be without it. Think, too, of the importance of each one of these children to the home whence he comes ; how a clean, orderly, attentive, good child spreads about him — he knows not how,

and his parents know not how, and his brothers and sisters know not how — an influence which may end in their very highest good. So it has been elsewhere, even in the schools which attend this Cathedral. So to a great extent it has been, and so it will be more and more, in the schools for which I am now speaking.

* * * * *

It is a homely application of the text ; but it is not less true because it is homely, — because it belongs to our own doors, to our own homes, because it is intended to make the children who may meet us every day, better neighbours to us, better servants of God, better scholars of Jesus Christ, better able to represent Him in His absence. And, finally, remember that it is one of a thousand applications of Christ's words to His Apostle. Those words contain, if I may say so, the Gospel according to the Acts of the Apostles. They tell us, what the whole history of the life of S. Paul especially impresses upon us, that Christ, in His absence, is represented by His followers. He is present in their sufferings, in their good deeds, in their good words, in their good thoughts, in their good insti-

tutions. In this sense, it is most true that the Church is "His body." In this sense, every Christian is called to say in deed, if not in word, what S. Paul said most fully in both, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

[This sermon was inserted, as it was preached, as a connecting link between the series which precedes and the series which follows. For an expansion of its contents I may be permitted to refer to an essay on "The Epistles to the Corinthians in their Relation to the Gospel History," and to a sermon preached in S. Paul's Cathedral, "Follow Paul and follow Christ," Jan. 30th, 1859.]

SERMON X.

THE DOCTRINE OF S. PAUL.

(ADVENT SUNDAY, 1837.)



ROMANS xiii. 12, 13, 14.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand : let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day ; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

It has been observed what advantage is given to any speaker or teacher who takes his stand, not merely on his powers of teaching or speaking, but on some famous deed that he

has done, some long experience that he has won, even some great hereditary name and ancestry. We are hushed into silence even before he begins to speak, we listen to what he tells us with an interest independent of his actual words; what he has done is a pledge to us that what he says is worth receiving. So it is with many passages of Scripture. They come down to us, not only armed with their divine authority, not only relying on their intrinsic excellence, but invested with a long train of recollections, bearing with them the trophies and spoils of the strong men of the earth whom they have vanquished, calling upon us to listen to them by virtue of the victories they have already achieved. Such is the passage which closes the Epistle of this day's service. Doubtless every Advent as it comes round brings with its impressive and consoling accents something that moves some one soul that was never moved before; and when the great day arrives which shall disclose the secrets of all hearts, when every deed and word of man shall give up its account to God, this text will lay before the throne thousands whom it has caused to awake out

of sleep, to cast away the deeds of darkness, and to put on the armour of light. But out of all these one will stand out prominent,—one which is so well known and so important, and yet so closely connected with this passage, that the day on which it is thus read in church may almost be called the anniversary of the event,—I mean the conversion of the great S. Augustine. Let us, before we apply the words to ourselves, consider this instructive and impressive story, as an introduction to the general subject on which I purpose to address you for the ensuing Sundays.

Augustine's youth had been one of reckless self-indulgence. He had plunged into the worst sins of the heathen world in which he lived; he had adopted wild opinions to justify those sins; and thus, though his parents were Christians, he himself remained a heathen in his manner of life, though not without some struggles of his better self and of God's grace against these evil habits. Often he struggled and often he fell; but he had two advantages which again and again have saved souls from ruin,—advantages which no one who enjoys them (and how many of us do enjoy them!)

can prize too highly,—he had a good mother and he had good friends. He had a good mother, who wept for him, and prayed for him, and warned him, and gave him that advice which only a mother can give, forgotten for the moment, but remembered afterwards. And he had good friends, who watched every opportunity to encourage better thoughts, and to bring him to his better self. In this state of struggle and failure he came to the city of Milan, where the Christian community was ruled by a man of fame almost equal to that which he himself afterwards won, the celebrated Ambrose. And now the crisis of his life was come, and it shall be described in his own words. He was sitting with his friend, his whole soul was shaken with the violence of his inward conflict,—the conflict of breaking away from his evil habits, from his evil associates, to a life which seemed to him poor, and profitless, and burdensome. Silently the two friends sate together, and at last, says Augustine, “when deep reflection had brought together and heaped up all my misery in the sight of my heart, there arose a mighty storm of grief, bringing a mighty shower of tears.”

He left his friend, that he might weep in solitude; he threw himself down under a fig-tree in the garden (the spot is still pointed out in Milan), and he cried in the bitterness of his spirit, "How long? how long?—to-morrow? to-morrow? Why not now?—why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?" "So was I speaking and weeping in the contrition of my heart," he says, "when, lo! I heard from a neighbouring house a voice as of a child, chanting and oft repeating, 'Take up and read, take up and read.' Instantly my countenance altered; I began to think whether children were wont in play to sing such words, nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So, checking my tears, I rose, taking it to be a command from God to open the book and read the first chapter I should find." Eagerly he returned to the place where his friend was sitting, for there lay the volume of S. Paul's Epistles, which he had just begun to study. "I seized it," he says, "I opened it, and in silence I read that passage on which my eyes first fell. *'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envy-*

ing. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' No further could I read, nor needed I; for instantly, at the end of this sentence, by a serene light infused into my soul, all the darkness of doubt vanished away."

We need not follow the story further. We know how he broke off all his evil courses; how his mother's heart was rejoiced; how he was baptized by the great Ambrose; how the old tradition describes their singing together, as he came up from the baptismal waters, the alternate verses of the hymn called from its opening words *Te Deum Laudamus*. We know how the profligate African youth was thus transformed into the most illustrious saint of the Western Church, how he lived long as the light of his own generation, and how his works have been cherished and read by good men, perhaps more extensively than those of any Christian teacher, since the Apostles.

It is a story instructive in many ways. It is an example, like the conversion of S. Paul, of the fact that from time to time God calls His servants not by gradual, but by sudden changes. These conversions are, it is true,

the exceptions and not the rule of Providence, but such examples as Augustine show us that we must acknowledge the truth of the exceptions when they do occur. It is also an instance how, even in such sudden conversions, previous good influences have their weight. The prayers of his mother, the silent influence of his friend, the high character of Ambrose, the preparation for Christian truth in the writings of heathen philosophers, were all laid up, as it were, waiting for the spark, and, when it came, the fire flashed at once through every corner of his soul. It is a striking instance, also, of the effect of a single passage of Scripture, suddenly but seriously taken to heart. It may come to us as to him, through the voice of a little child, or through the prompting of our own conscience, or through the recurrence of the words in the church service. . . .

It is also a fitting call for us, as these words come round, to listen to the voice of Advent saying to us, "Take up and read, Take up and read," not one solitary passage only, but the whole roll of S. Paul's Epistles, but above

all, the parts of them most like to that which roused Augustine from the sleep of sin. Let us "take up and read" the practical portions of S. Paul's Epistles, those in which he brings home to the life and conduct of his converts the spirit and example of Christ, those in which he urges us, as here, so elsewhere, to cast aside the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light. These portions are contained in some degree in every chapter of his Epistles, but more especially in those which I now name, and urge upon you all for your especial reading, for yourselves, and in your families :— Rom. xii. xiii. xiv. xv., parts of almost every chapter of the two Epistles to the Corinthians, Gal. v. vi., Eph. iv. v. vi., Phil. iv., Col. iii. iv., 1 Thess. iv. v., 2 Thess. iii., 1 Tim. vi., Tit. ii. iii. I might, in like manner, extend this enumeration to all the Apostolical Epistles, but it will suffice for our purpose to select passages here and there, as samples of the teaching of S. Paul, according as they are brought before us in the church services. And this morning I propose to set before you the reasons why, as a sequel to the Example and the Teaching of

Christ, these portions of the Epistles may be profitably urged upon your notice.

I. Let us remember the great importance attached to them by the Apostle himself. In saying this, we do not disparage any other part. Most instructive is the representation of the Apostle's personal feelings; most useful for the history and government of the Church his directions as to worship, and order, and teaching; most interesting, even when most difficult, his controversies with Jew and Gentile which have furnished so many a text of controversy to Christians of later times. Nor, again, need we separate the two portions of his teaching asunder, as if one did not bear upon the other. Nothing is less practical than a mere moral essay. — We often read the story, and miss the moral, — we often learn more from a deed, from a look, from a gesture, of a good man, than from many precepts. But it is the charm of these practical exhortations of S. Paul that they are *not* mere moral essays — they are *not* mere moral lessons attached to truths, which can be better understood without them. They are full of his own

life and spirit; they are the outpouring of his innermost mind; they are the very flower and fruit of all that tangled undergrowth of thorny thickets, through which we struggle to arrive at these blessed conclusions.

I dwell the more on the vast importance with which these practical chapters of the Epistles are invested, because we are sometimes apt to think that they are of less moment than those parts which we call doctrinal. What Luther once, in a hasty mood, of which he afterwards repented, said of the Epistle of S. James, that it was an epistle of straw, we are sometimes apt to think deliberately of all the practical portions of the Apostolical writings. We think them too easy, or too simple, to need our attention; we think that the other portions are the pure doctrine of the Apostle, "gold, silver, and precious stones," and that these are "but as straw, hay, and stubble."

So thought not the great Saint Augustine when the practical words of the text went as a sword through his heart, — so thought not the blessed Apostle himself. Look at the place which they occupy in his writings. In

almost every instance it is the final concluding portion,—the very place which, in our speeches, in our sermons, in our letters, we reserve for whatever we wish to be the most impressive, the most telling, the most striking of all that we have to say. And even where the general argument, as in the Epistles to Corinth, cannot be thus wound up, yet then each particular argument is interwoven with the same practical conclusion. We cannot escape from it. The Apostle would no more omit such moral exhortations in his Epistles, than preachers of modern days would omit to enforce whatever was to them the peculiar tenet or doctrine of their own peculiar sect. In other points his mode of dealing with the subject before him varies, according to times, and persons, and places. In this point, he is always the same with himself, and with his brother Apostles.

The distinction which we sometimes draw between the doctrinal and the practical portion of his Epistles was unknown to him. To him all was “doctrine” alike; or rather, that was especially “doctrine,” to which we now often deny the name. “The form of doctrine”

in which the Romans were instructed was that which made them "free from sin and servants of righteousness."¹ Those against whom he warned Timotheus as contrary to "sound doctrine" were not teachers of erroneous opinions, but "unholy and profane, murderers, menstealers, liars, perjurers."² Christian principle and conduct was to him the noblest orthodoxy, unchristian practice was to him the worst heresy.

"Love,"³ "love to our neighbour as to ourselves," is, as he says in the words immediately preceding the text, "the fulfilling of the law." "Love," we may also say, is "the fulfilling of the Gospel." It is the very doctrine into which the Gospel is drawn out,—it is the atmosphere in which the truths of the Gospel live and move, out of which they die and fade away.

II. And this brings me to the next point which makes these chapters so necessary to be considered. They are amongst all the manifold displays of the Apostle's wisdom, those which exhibit a spirit the most purely

¹ Rom. vi. 18.

² 1 Tim. i. 9, 10.

³ Rom. xiii. 10.

Evangelical,—that is to say, they are the portions which most resemble, most closely unite us to the actual teaching of the Gospels themselves. There have been persons who, from various causes and at various times, have endeavoured to enhance and exaggerate the difference between the Epistles and the Gospels, between S. Paul and his Master. Some have done this, in order to exalt the Gospels above the Epistles, crying out, “Not Paul, but Jesus ;” others have done it to exalt the Epistles above the Gospels, crying out, “Not the beggarly elements of the Gospels, but the spiritual perfection of the Epistles.” To both of these objections the practical portions of the Apostolical writings furnish the best answer. Whatever difference may be exhibited between other portions of the Epistles and the Evangelical narratives, differences occasioned by peculiarities of time, place, and object, too long here to be examined, yet between *these* portions of the Epistles and the Evangelical narratives, there is absolutely no difference at all. The one is but the expansion, the application of the other: the spirit of the four Gospels breaks out in every

sentence ; here, at any rate, we feel that, in listening to the Apostle, we are listening to the very words and tones of Jesus Christ our Lord. Often the very same expressions recur : but even when the expressions are different, the spirit is the same. No one can mistake, for instance, that the climax of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, in the description of Love or Charity, is the peculiar product of the Life and Teaching of Christ, and of no one else.

In the Gospels we see the mind that was in Christ Jesus, as it were, afar off, in its original, unapproachable, divine excellence. In these chapters of the Epistles we are taught to apprehend, to appropriate Him to ourselves. *Apprehension of Christ, appropriation of Christ*, these are familiar phrases. If we would know what such phrases mean, what is their living power and force, we must turn to these calm, clear, wise, Apostolical applications of His righteousness to our unrighteousness—cleansing, transforming, elevating the sinful race of man into the likeness of Himself. The Spirit “has taken the things of Christ, and shown them” to the Apostle, and he in

return shows them to us. The Rock of Ages stands before us in the Gospels, immovable for all time. In the clefts of that Rock the Apostle in these chapters entreats us to "hide our life,"¹ our manifold, various, daily life, "with Christ in God." "Tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering:" this is what he bids us "put on," when he bids us "put on,"² not in figure, but in act and deed, "the Lord Jesus Christ."

III. Yet, once more, if these chapters are most Apostolical and most Evangelical, they are also, in the fullest sense of the word, most Catholic. The other portions of the Epistles are useful for special occasions, for special classes of men. The philosophical student will delight in the depth and subtilty of the 7th and 9th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans; the historical student will turn to the lively descriptions of the early Church and of the character of the Apostle in the 1st and 2nd Epistles to the Corinthians; the Pastoral Epistles will be read by those who have to teach and rule the Church. But all

¹ Col. iii. 3.

² Col. iii. 12; Rom. xiii. 14.

can equally delight in those parts of which I am now speaking. If the other portions of S. Paul's Epistles contain, as S. Peter says¹, "things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction;" if they are guarded by gigantic difficulties which stand at the entrance like the cherubs with the flaming sword to ward off rash intruders; these portions contain hardly anything but what he who runs may read; in this respect, as in so many others, approaching to the homely yet lofty and universal character of the teaching of our Lord Himself. The Epistles of S. Peter, S. James, and the first Epistle of S. John are called "Catholic" or general, precisely because of their possessing this universal or general application to all classes of men. And it may further be observed that it is from the similar portions of S. Paul's Epistles, with very few exceptions, that the Catholic or Universal Church, Eastern and Western, Anglican and Lutheran, has selected the passages to be read as the Epistles of the Sunday services. Look through the Sunday Epistles, from the first Sunday of

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 16.

Advent to the long series of Sundays after Trinity, and you will find that, whilst almost all of them have some bearing on the directly moral and practical lessons of the Gospel, at least forty out of the fifty-four relate to hardly anything else; and our own Church especially has shown its mind still more clearly by choosing for its second lesson on the one day in the year (the 29th of February) when we are left free to choose whatever might be thought most appropriate and most important, not any of the more abstruse chapters of S. Paul, but the summary of Christian duties contained in the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, immediately preceding that from which the text is taken. By dwelling, therefore, on these portions of the Apostolical writings we are following, not only the dictates of the universal common sense of mankind, we are also following in the direction pointed out by the concurrent voice of the Church of all ages, and of our own Church in particular.

IV. Once more, these samples of the Apostolical teaching are not only most Catholic,

but they are also, in the best sense of the word, most Protestant. There have been many corruptions and superstitions growing up in the Church in different times and countries. But there is one main corruption and superstition, against which it is our duty at all times and in all countries to *protest*. Every religious community, nay, every religious individual, is tempted to set the outward above the inward, the ceremonial above the spiritual, the feelings or the understanding above the conscience; to think more of sacrifice than of mercy, more of the blood of bulls and goats, more of mint, anise, and cummin, more of saying "Lord, Lord," than of justice, humility, and truth. Against this tendency, wheresoever shown, there is, if one may use the expression, an eternal *Protest*,—an eternal *Protestantism*,—enshrined in every part of Scripture, but nowhere more visible than in these chapters of the Apostolical Epistles. Let a man study them well, mark their supreme importance, drink in their spirit with his whole mind and soul; and then he will be proof against all the

various errors which lead us to regard outward forms, or correct opinions, or religious emotions, as more pleasing in the sight of God, than the Christian graces which the Apostle here urges upon us as the object of his whole teaching. He who rightly, and in their due proportions, attends to these warnings and exhortations, will, even amidst the worst corruptions, silently and unconsciously protest against them. He who, with whatever profession of faith, places any form, or any doctrine, or any feeling of whatever kind, above the homely duties to which the Apostle thus directs his main attention, will be turned aside from the path of "pure and undefiled religion," no less than if he were the most benighted member of the Church of Spain, or of the Church of Abyssinia.

V. Yet further; these portions of Scripture exhibit, in a striking shape, a remarkable characteristic of all Scripture, its foresight, its anticipation of modern thoughts and wants most remote from the time when the words were written, but most near to our

own. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." So wrote the Apostle, in the expectation as it would seem of a closer approach of the latter days than was borne out by the actual event. Yet that very expectation seems to have been made the means, under God, of carrying him forward into the future; of placing him, as it were, in the midst of our own days, of our own trials, of our own questions. Read these chapters in this point of view, and you will see in them the divine authority with which he speaks proved by a most undoubted, because a most unexpected, sign. They are, it is true, full of his own personal experiences; but they are full of ours also. They are prophecies in the entire sense of the word,—prophecies of what we want to be told, of what no one else can tell us; prophecies fulfilled by reading to us the secrets of our own hearts, by unravelling to us the riddle of our own times. The night of the heathen persecutions is over; the night of the dark ages is faded away; the night of the storms of religious and civil discord is far spent; the day of civilisation, of enlightenment, of knowledge—so we fondly,

perhaps too fondly, hope—is near at hand. Yet in that day the best armour in which we can clothe ourselves is still the armour which the Apostle commends;—his words are still applicable; he is a child not of the past night, but of the present and of the coming day: his advice, his teaching, his exhortations will stand the test of all the light of all the enlightenment of the most enlightened, the most inquiring ages.

VI. And, finally,—this teaching of the Apostle is the most important to all of us, because, in one word, it is the most *practical*. Not to the world at large only, but to each one amongst us, “the night is far spent, the day is at hand.” Young and old, our time is passing away: we are every one of us drawing nearer to that day when we shall meet the Judge of all mankind. God knows that we have all need of mercy—of His infinite mercy. Every one who knows his own heart, knows how welcome is any thought that softens the severity of that judgment, that brings home to us the sense of that mercy—how gladly we trust that the love which was manifested in

Christ Jesus is indeed boundless, and overflows even where it is least expected. "God be merciful to me a sinner" must be the prayer even of the best and purest of men. But not the less must we bear in mind that even our sense of God's mercy will be shaken unless it is accompanied by the sense of His eternal justice, of our eternal duty. This it is which is set before us by these practical chapters, these farewell entreaties, these solemn conclusions of the whole Apostolical doctrine. We may not limit the mercy of God — but neither may we invent any other way of salvation than that which He has appointed for us. There is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ — the Holy, the Just, and the Good — Jesus, the Saviour, who came to "save us from our sins,"¹ — Christ, the Redeemer, who came "to redeem us from all iniquity."² There is no other means by which we can enter Heaven, save that "holiness, without which no man shall see God."³ There is no other rule whereby we shall be judged, but "according

¹ Matt. i. 21.² Tit. ii. 14.³ Heb. xii. 14.

to the works done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil.”¹

“God be merciful to us sinners.” God give us grace to cast aside the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light!

¹ 2 Cor. v. 10.

SERMON XI.

THE DOCTRINE OF APOSTOLICAL TOLERATION.

(SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT, 1857.)



ROM. xv. 7.

Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

I SPOKE last Sunday of the well-known story of the conversion of Augustine by the practical address of the Apostle, which I took as a sample of this whole portion of his teaching. The sequel to the story will introduce us to the first special instance of this practical teaching, which occurs in the services of this day. Augustine had opened the volume of S. Paul's Epistles, as you will remember, at the close of the thirteenth chapter. His eye

fell on the words of last Sunday's Epistle. In a moment he was cheered, calmed, converted. With the book in his hand, his finger at the place, he returned to the faithful friend Alypius, who had been so long vainly endeavouring to reclaim him from his wild and wayward courses. The friend saw in a moment that a change had come over him, and took the volume from his hand, saw the passage which had wrought the conversion, and *his* eye, wandering on to the next words, was arrested by the passage which stands at the beginning of the fourteenth chapter: "Him that is weak in the faith receive." He accepted the application to the new convert, he threw no obstacles in his way, he did not inquire how far the conversion was complete, how far his views were correctly formed; he received him at once—"not to doubtful disputations"—he took him by the hand, he led him to the house of his mother Monica, and in her presence the joy of the returning penitent was completed.

The Christian duty which the friend of Augustine thus recognised in the precept of the Apostle is the subject of the whole of the

fourteenth and part of the fifteenth chapter of the Epistle, and beginning with the injunction to "receive him that is weak in the faith" concludes with the like exhortation which we have just heard, "Wherefore, receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God."

"To receive the weak," to tolerate differences, to bear with infirmities, to recognise the sacredness of scruples with which we have ourselves no sympathy — this is the doctrine of this passage of the Epistle to the Romans, which has been well called the charter of Christian liberty, the bond of Christian charity, the standard of Christian unity.¹

It is a remarkable combination of the various characteristics of the practical and concluding portions of the Apostle's teaching. Read over the precepts of that chapter; consider how many are the errors which with one blow it puts to flight, how many are the wise truths which it brings out, how far forward it reaches into the future, how firmly it grounds itself on the Gospel history in the past; how evangelical it is in its foundation,

¹ Arnold's Sermons, vol. iii. p. 258.

how catholic in its scope, how philosophical, how modern in its application.

“Him that is weak in the faith, receive, but not to doubtful disputations Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, and let not him which eateth not despise him that eateth, for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, and he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. . . . Let us not judge one another any more; but judge this rather that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way. . . . There is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth anything to be

“unclean, to him it is unclean. . . . All things are pure, but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. . . . Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.”

What principles are these which we have announced? Are they not the very words of the most refined, the most recent maxims of modern enlightenment? Latitude of choice, liberty of conscience, sacredness of private judgment, recognition of contradictory truths within the same religious communion, were not these, one and all, enforced in the successive verses that I have read? And yet (O miracle of divine inspiration, if we rightly consider it!) these words were not written in the nineteenth or in the eighteenth century. They were written hundreds of years ago,—hundreds of years before these modern, but as it seems from this chapter, these really most ancient, most Apostolical thoughts had dawned on the mind of ordinary men. They were written, it may almost be said, before they could be understood by any one: they were written to lie forgotten and buried

for ages. Here and there some genial spirit, like the friend of Augustine, like the good S. Bernard, like Sir Thomas More, like Richard Baxter, like Bishop Ken, may have caught a glimpse into their deep truth; but for the most part, we have but to look at the course of Christian history, and we tremble at the contrast which they present. Think of the long series of years in which Christians have persecuted Christians, to prison, to torture, to death, — think of John Huss at Constance, and of Servetus at Geneva, — think of the Puritans in England, and the Covenanters in Scotland, both in their days of suffering, and in their days of triumph; and then remember, “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.” Think of the way in which our fathers carried on their controversies respecting vestments, and postures, new moons, and fast days and feast days, and Sabbaths, — on one side and on the other side; — and then remember, “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, to the Lord he regardeth it; he that regardeth

“not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard
“it: he that eateth, eateth to the Lord; and
“he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth
“not.” We tremble, we wonder as we read
these things by the light of the contrast of
the past; nay, may we not also say, we
tremble, we wonder as we read them by the
light of the contrast of the present? True
it is, that in a certain sense their sound is
now familiar to us;—true it is, that the
grosser violation of their spirit is now become
impossible. Thanks to the good Providence
of God, the principles which the Apostle
once spoke in the ear in closets, are now
proclaimed on the house-tops;—what he
spoke in the darkness and confusion of past
times, is now heard in the noon-day light
of a listening world. Thanks also to the
good Providence of God, the Church in which
our lot is cast, has been, unconsciously per-
haps, but most certainly, built up on the
foundation of the very principles which S.
Paul here lays down for the guidance of all
mankind;—embracing differences, combining
extremes, recognising scruples, acknowledg-
ing contradictions. Yet still, who will say

that even now the Apostle's warning voice is not needed?—how few endeavour, nay, how difficult shall we find it, each in our own case, to act up even to the professions of our own age, even to the fundamental principles of mutual forbearance recognised in our own church and country!—how doubly and trebly difficult, then, to reach to that calm elevation, that dispassionate neutrality of judgment, which the Apostle places before us! Tolerant, enlightened, charitable, liberal as we may boast ourselves to be, yet the Apostle has gone beyond us; he has reached a height to which we have not yet attained; in him the weakness of God is stronger than the strength or the wisdom of the world.

I. Such a statement of the Apostle's doctrine carries with it always a twofold lesson. First, it is a testimony of the power and energy of the Spirit that was in him—it reminds us that the doctrine which he taught is not behind the age in which we live,—nay, rather that it is far in advance of us still in the very points on which we most pride ourselves. It reminds us that the widest freedom, the

manliest independence, is not inconsistent with the humblest devotion, with the purest simplicity of faith—nay, rather that each grows out of and into the other. Look once more at this chapter, and see how profoundly Christian, in the full sense of the word, is the spirit from which all his toleration springs. Here, if anywhere in his writings, we see the proof of what I observed here before—how the Apostle and his Master are one. “None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.” So he lays the foundation of true Christian toleration, not in selfish independence but in mutual dependence. Yet not in human dependence only, not only in dependence of one upon another, true as this is and most important. He goes deeper still; “For whether we live, we live unto the *Lord*, and whether we die, we die unto the *Lord*; whether we live, therefore, or whether we die, we are the *Lord's*.” “The *Lord*,” that is, the *Lord Jesus Christ*. For he adds, “to this end *Christ* both died and rose and revived, that He might be the *Lord* both of the dead and living. . . . We shall all stand before the judgment seat of *Christ*.”

And as he had begun, so he continues to refer his whole principle to the spirit of Christ. His principle was, as he well knew, and, as we can see in the Gospel narrative, inaugurated, so to speak, by our Lord Himself. He, the Divine Redeemer, who “took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses;” He who “tolerated,” so we may literally say, the manifold weaknesses of His disciples and of His enemies; He who refused to quench the smoking flax or to break the bruised reed; He who proclaimed liberty to the captive heart; He who broke the yoke of the ancient law; He who taught that God was a spirit, and to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, —had given to the Apostle the fullest sanction for all that he here sets forth. Therefore, he says, “Destroy not him with thy meat, *for whom Christ died.*” Therefore, he says, “I know and am persuaded” (not in the spirit of licentious speculation or of worldly wisdom, but) “*in the Lord Jesus*, that there is nothing unclean of itself.” Therefore, “we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves, *for even Christ pleased not Himself.*” Therefore, “the

God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one towards another *according to Christ Jesus.*” Therefore, “receive ye one another, *as Christ also received us,* to the glory of God.” Let no one after this bring a disparaging accusation against the duty of toleration, of forbearance, as though it were a mere heathen, moral virtue; let no one after this bring a disparaging accusation against religion, as though it encouraged narrowness or persecution or bigotry. No; it is a duty most difficult, a virtue most rare; but it is a duty most Apostolical, it is a virtue most Evangelical, most Christlike.

II. And this leads me, in the second place, to ask how this duty may be best brought home to ourselves. It may have seemed, perhaps, as I have been quoting and explaining the Apostle’s doctrine, that it may apply to great concerns of churches and states, but not to the humbler matters of life, in which most of us, happily far removed from such controversies, have no interest. But not so. Moderation and forbearance, and respect to the consciences of others, are graces too blessed not

to be useful anywhere. Intolerance and hasty judgment are evils too deeply rooted in human nature not to be found everywhere.

1. And first, the lesson applies directly even to those who would perhaps least expect it,—my younger hearers. Strange as it may seem, it is certain that there is no class in whom we can more easily trace the existence and the mischief of this intolerance, of this incapacity and reluctance to enter into the feelings and thoughts of others, than in boys at school. We see it in regard to their companions, we see it in regard to their elders. How difficult it is for boys and young men, especially for those who are engaged in active sports, and who exult in health and strength, to “bear with the infirmities of the weak.” Any pursuit that is not their own pursuit, any character that is not like their own character, they misunderstand, they dislike, they persecute. By this recklessness, by this heedlessness, again and again, you destroy, you ruin weaker brethren, those little ones for whom Christ died. A weak frame, a timid spirit, a tender conscience,—think whether this is not

the very game which you most delight to torment, to perplex, to ridicule, to misrepresent.

How difficult, again, it is for boys or young men to understand rightly the motives, the intentions, the objects of those who are placed over them. How perversely they mistake what is meant for their good, how ready they are to put the worst construction on the simplest actions, how much good you lose for yourselves, how much annoyance you cause to others, by no other cause than this narrow, childish, yet most unchristian intolerance of the characters, of the dealings, of the plans of those who are separated from them by age, or station, or authority.

To you, therefore, my younger friends, to you, as one speaking of what he himself remembers, to those who will in time learn to know it also, to you let me apply the Apostle's maxims in all their vigour and force. They may, it is true, be little needed, but still the temptation is there. Remember that there are characters which you cannot fully understand, and for which you must therefore make allowance. Remember that although you

cannot see the reason, others may be fully persuaded in their own minds of that which to you seems strange and doubtful. Remember that it is good "not to eat flesh nor to drink wine nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." Remember that you especially who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please yourselves. Remember that you are to "receive" one another, to "receive" the advances, the intentions of your superiors, to "receive" the will for the deed, to "receive" things not as they may seem to you but as you know that they are meant by others. "Receive ye one another as Christ also received you, to the glory of God" — for that common glory for which we all alike must work.

2. And next, if we turn to ourselves generally, what can I say more than say the same thing in other words, or even in the same words? The folly, the narrowness, the perverseness, the intolerance of the young is indeed often the best lesson, the best warning to children of a larger growth in after years.

"Receive ye one another, as Christ received us;" this is the key-note of the Apostle's ar-

gument, and is the root of the whole matter. "Receive," that is, "take to yourselves," "take to your bosoms," "place in your full view," those whose scruples or whose want of scruples, whose overweakness or whose overstrength we naturally would put from us and thrust into the distance.

"Receive them." If they are unknown to us, if they are far off, let us rejoice in seeing them, let us find out how much better they themselves are than our own expectations, than our conceptions of them, — nay, than their own professions, than their own representations of themselves.

"Receive them." Look at their proceedings, their arguments, their opinions, their scruples, not from our point of view, but from theirs. This is the only way of doing, I will not say charity, but justice to those who are unlike ourselves. Even after all the allowance, we may still find much to condemn; but till we have thus "received them," till we have thus apprehended what they mean, till we have laboured to apprehend what they mean, we are no judges at all in the matter. Do to them as we would that they should do to

us. Place ourselves in their situation, and ask what we should do starting from their belief, from their knowledge, from their ignorance, from their mistakes. "Believe yourselves ignorant" (this was a good rule once laid down with regard to difficult authors), "believe yourselves ignorant of their understanding, unless we are first sure that we understand their ignorance." Let us call our opponents, whether sects, or churches, or individuals, not by the dark names which their adversaries have invented for them, but by the names which they recognise themselves. Little, very little of principle can ever be compromised by this simple rule; and much, very much will be gained to truth, to charity, to knowledge, to justice. Remember that what appear to us to be contradictions are not so of necessity to others. There is always a higher point of view than either you or your adversary has reached. "Receive one another, *as Christ has received us.*" He "received" infirmities, contradictions, disunions, in His first disciples, in His primitive Church, far greater than any which now divide us. We are not suffering under any greater weight of distraction and

suspense than that to which S. Paul thought it a sufficient answer to say, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Remember the story of the aged fire-worshipper whom Abraham drove from his door, and the divine answer, "I have borne with him for these hundred years, and couldest thou not bear with him for one night?" Remember that underneath a thousand contradictions there is a depth below into which God sees, though we cannot; nay, into which we can see, though we cannot reconcile all the parts together. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," is not any of the points which torment and vex us "but" is that which we see, and hear, and feel, across and beside all these things; it is, he tells us, "RIGHTEOUSNESS—PEACE—JOY." What homely, yet what divine words are these; how solid, how refreshing, how cheerful — "*righteousness, and peace, and joy*, IN THE HOLY GHOST;" not in the spirit of worldly compromise, but in the depth of that Holy fellowship which unites us to God and to Christ. "For he that IN THESE THINGS "serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow

after. . . . ” (Is there any one who will not be the better and the wiser for listening to what the two things are which the Apostle tells us to follow after?) “THE THINGS WHICH
“MAKE FOR PEACE AND THE THINGS WHERE-
“WITH ONE MAY EDIFY ANOTHER.”

tian sympathy. Each unquestionably had much to say against the other. Yet to each the Apostle says, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything." His zeal for his country, as a Hebrew of the Hebrews,—“circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews,”—did not lead him unduly to exalt circumcision. His zeal for Christian liberty, as Apostle of the Gentiles, his long controversy against his bitter opponents amongst the Jews, did not lead him unduly to exalt *un*-circumcision. Wherever or whatever elsewhere circumcision or uncircumcision might either of them avail, yet “in CHRIST JESUS,” who came to unite them both together, neither of them availed anything.

How are we to apply this to ourselves? I will not profane this sacred day by naming any of those divisions which rend asunder Christians now, as circumcision and uncircumcision rent them asunder then. I will only say this: Think for one moment of any of the differences which seem most to separate all or any of us from any classes, from any

individuals amongst our fellow Christians, amongst our fellow churchmen. Think of those differences in the gravest form in which you like to put them,—think of the church, the party, the sect, the opinions, against which you feel most keenly. And then remember that “in Christ Jesus” they “avail nothing at all.” They may avail, they may be of importance, socially, ecclesiastically, politically, philosophically; they may affect us in our dealings with households, with nations, with churches, with commonwealths.—But not “in Christ Jesus.” In Him, who came to visit us on earth,—in Him, who shall return again to judge us,—these things have *no* place. However important they may be to us, they cannot be more important than circumcision and uncircumcision were to Christians in the days of S. Paul. In the dealings of men with Christ our Saviour,—in the life and death of the soul,—in the depth of religious convictions,—they availed nothing then, and therefore they avail nothing now. Every one feels at once that to dwell on these differences on this great Festival, would be altogether out of

place, unseemly and distasteful ; and it is for the very same reason, namely, because they belong not to the essentials of religion, not to its substance, not to its life, but only to its outward accidents, its bulwarks and defences. We do not find them in the life of Christ in the Gospels ; we do not find them in the parts of the Epistles which most nearly resemble the Gospels, and which are most near to the spirit of Christ ; we do not dwell upon them on days like these, which are especially Gospel Festivals, — days of Christ Jesus Himself ; we shall not be judged by them when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ ; we shall not find them in the world beyond the grave, where God in Christ shall be all in all. No ; “in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision ;” neither in retaining these things, nor in attacking these things, shall we find rest to our souls, or union with Him, — neither in the eager assertion of those things, nor in their eager denial, does Christianity consist.

In what then does it consist ? In what is its essence ? How can we apply it to ourselves ? What is it that will avail in the presence,

in the spirit, in the teaching, in the judgment, of Him who as on this day was born into the world ?

1. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision — but a new creature." "A new creature" — "a new creation." This is indeed the subject of this day's thoughts; every part of the services impresses this upon us: let us drive it home to ourselves. "A new creation in Christ Jesus." Is it not this which in our Lord Jesus Himself "avails" most, and is most wonderfully brought before us at this season? — We know, we have felt in life what an effect is produced by coming in contact with some new character, some new form or idea of goodness, such as was before unknown to us: what hopes, what elevation of soul, what enlargement of mind, what self-reproach, what self-knowledge, what zeal, what admiration, does it kindle within us! Such a new character, such a new form or idea of goodness in the highest sense, the world met, as she wandered on her way, in the person of Jesus Christ. He came across the path of the erring race of man, just at the time when the exist-

ing shapes and forms of virtue and religion seemed to be wearing themselves out: He came as a new element, a new leaven, into the old corrupted mass. He was literally a new creation. He was, what the Apostle calls him, a second Adam, a new man, a second beginning in the history of our race. From Him, and in Him, the world as it were took a new lease of life. It was this newness, this freshness, this difference from all that had gone before, — which, even more than mere power, or wisdom, or goodness, availed in Him to win the world to Himself. Men were arrested by the combination of graces which they had before never seen united; men were attracted by a voice which spake as never man had spoken before; men were touched by a tenderness more awful than severity; men were awed by a wisdom which was majestic from its very simplicity and its loneliness.

2. Thus it was that the birthday of Christ became the second birthday of the world. Henceforth we no longer reckon our years from the beginning of the Grecian festivals, or the old corrupt empires of the earth, or the old creation of the world, — but from this day.

“Old things are passed away : behold all things are become new.” To a great degree in the world at large, as well as in Christ Himself, the real force and power of His Spirit and of His coming is seen in “the *new* creation” which has passed over the face of the earth since He deigned to visit us. Look even at its outward form : have not the Prophet’s words been almost literally fulfilled? Before the onward march of Christian civilisation, through Christian settlers and monasteries and discoverers, the dark forests of Europe and America have disappeared, and “the wilderness and the solitary place has been made glad” with cities and commonwealths ; and “the desert has blossomed as the rose, and rejoiced with joy and singing.” Many forms of beauty, no doubt, adorned the ancient world, and with it have passed away. But in their place have arisen new shapes of grace, before as unknown as were the new creatures, the new creations of the natural world, to those dark primæval epochs when the earth was without form and void — in architecture, in sculpture, in painting, in poetry : how complex, how various, how

onward in their movement, how lofty in their repose! Above all, remember the new creations of a far greater than outward beauty—the new creations of useful and beneficent institutions, with which, as with a network, the whole of Christendom is overspread—pastors, teachers, schools, churches, hospitals, almshouses; and yet more, the new moral atmosphere of higher hopes, nobler affections, a new conscience of the world, new influences, which are felt where they are not named, which penetrate where they are not acknowledged; but which do indeed “in Christ Jesus” go to form a new creation; and in Him and in His Spirit have mightily “availed” to renew the face of the earth.

3. But there is yet a fuller and deeper sense in which, not only as regards the world at large, but our own selves, “a new creature” is the sum and substance of the Gospel of Christ. “If any man be in Christ,” says the Apostle, “he is a new creature.” “Except a man be born again,” says our Lord Himself, “he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “To as many as believed in Him,” we heard in the Gospel of this morning, “He gave power

to become the sons of God." "By the washing of regeneration," we have read this evening, "and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, He saved us."¹ What, then, as applied to ourselves, is the new creature—the new creation—the second birth—the regeneration of the soul—the renewal of the Holy Ghost? Unto us, unto the whole human race, "a Child was born, a Son was given" as on this day. How can we share in that birth and be partakers of that sonship? What is it? How can we attain to it? What are its results?

We see men moving to and fro in the world without purpose, without interest; we say, "Such an one seems to be without a mind, without a soul." Give that man an earnest purpose, a serious interest in life. This is in a limited, yet true sense, "to become a new creature." We know, also, what it is to be absorbed in the things of the day, the interest of the moment,—business, pleasure, party, study. To be raised above these things into a higher world, to feel that there is nothing so hateful as sin, nothing so lovely as goodness,

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17; John i. 12, iii. 3; Tit. iii. 5.

to have a keen sense of our own shortcomings, to know the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the exceeding brightness of justice, purity, holiness,—to feel the law of God to be sweeter than honey and the honeycomb—to be glad when we think or hear of the grace, the truth, the love of Christ—to look forward with pleasure to being with Him and with just men made perfect,—this is in a still fuller measure to become a new creature. To feel that there is a work before us to be done in this world before we die—to feel that God is with us, and that earth, and the things of earth have no power to turn us from our purpose—to have fears, and hopes, and pleasures and pains, of which the worldly man knows nothing—to feel that God in Christ has forgiven all that is past, and henceforth bids us joyfully serve Him in newness of life—to have within our hearts that divine faculty of Love or Charity which will alone outlast the great change of death—to show forth in our characters some trace, however slight, of “the mind which was in Christ Jesus,”—this is to become a new, heavenly, unearthly creature, which

“will avail,” which “will be strong,” (such is the true meaning of the word,) which will survive, when all else shall wax old and perish, which will have its abiding place in that “new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

This is to be a new creature. How are we to attain to it? Not, O my brethren, not in the same degree, but in every degree. There are babes in Christ, and youths in Christ, and men in Christ, and elders in Christ. The forms and characters of the new creation are as various as those of the old: the ways of grace are as manifold as the ways of nature. By Christian parentage, by Christian sacraments, by Christian education, by Christian example, by Christian study, by the influence of a Christian home and of Christian friends, by prayer, by the Bible, by sorrow, by joy, by all together, are we to grow up to the stature of the fulness of Christ. Yet one way especially, and one sign especially, there is of the new creature, which is expressly put before us in Scripture. It is set before us in two plain, manly, homely words. Let us not fear to use them; “We are His

workmanship," says the Apostle, "created in Christ Jesus¹ unto GOOD WORKS." Even so; again and again in the Epistle which has just been read to us, he reminds us that for this very purpose Christ came, as at this time, "to redeem us from all iniquity, a peculiar people — zealous of *good works*." "These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain *good works*."² "GOOD WORKS." Take both of these words in their true Scriptural sense, and we shall see how much they teach us, as to what the fruits of the New Creation should be. "*Good*," that is, beautiful, honest, noble works,—not mere ceremonies, not mere pretences, not mere outward mechanical acts, that have no connection with the inner life, but the fruits of a "good and honest heart" filled with the Spirit of Him who is the "fountain of all goodness." "*Works*," that is, not mere good intentions, or good resolutions, or good prayers, or good thoughts; but good *works*, good *deeds*, good *acts*. God knows there are few enough of these in the world or in ourselves; we cannot

¹ Eph. ii. 10.

² Titus, ii. 4; iii. 8.

spare any of them : yet without them the new creature can hardly be said to live within us ; without these it is stillborn, it is dead, it is useless, it gives no sign of motion or action. "Up and be *doing*," is the word that comes from God to each of us. Leave some "good work" behind you that shall not be wholly lost when you have passed away. *Do* something worth living for, worth dying for ; *do* something to show that you have a mind and a heart and a soul within you. Ask yourselves, each one as you leave this place, Is there no good deed which you can do to remind yourself, to remind others, that you are a Christian ? Is there no want, no suffering, no sorrow that you can relieve ? Is there no act of tardy justice, no deed of cheerful kindness, no long-forgotten duty that you can perform ? Is there no reconciliation of some ancient quarrel, no payment of some long outstanding debt, no courtesy, or love, or honour to be rendered to those to whom it has long been due ; no charitable, humble, kind, useful deed by which you can promote the glory of God, or good will among men, or peace upon earth ? If there be any such, in God's name, in Christ's name, go home and

do it. Let it be the beginning to us of a new creation; let the birthday of Christ our Saviour be the birthday of our souls also. He grew and grew in grace and wisdom. Let us grow and grow likewise, growing with His growth and strengthening with His strength, till in our weakness His strength shall be made perfect. God grant that the old Adam of passion, prejudice, selfishness, indolence, may be so buried in us that the new man may be raised up in us. God grant that we, being regenerate and made God's children by adoption, may be yearly, and monthly, and daily renewed by His Holy Spirit, through and in Christ Jesus His Son our Lord.

(NOTE on p. 197. — The thought here expressed is beautifully drawn out in the Sermons of the present Dean of Wells, pp. 48—62.)

SERMON XIII.

ESSENTIALS OF APOSTOLICAL DOCTRINE.

(2.) FAITH WORKING BY LOVE.

(PREACHED ON ST. JOHN'S DAY, 1867.)



GAL. V. 6.

In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

“*FAITH working by LOVE.*” This is the second aspect of practical Christianity exhibited by S. Paul;— the parallel which explains and expands the New Creature or New Creation of which I spoke on Christmas Day. The words are the words of S. Paul; but they might well stand as the summary of the teaching of that other great Apostle whom we this day commemorate. No where in the New Testament is the close connection of Faith and

Love so brought out as in the First General Epistle of S. John. No where else does every precept and doctrine so entirely twine itself round these two centres of Christian life. In S. Paul's writings you may by a violent effort sever the two asunder. One half of his Epistles more directly leads on to Faith, the other half more directly to Love. But in S. John they are absolutely indivisible. You cannot part them without tearing the whole Epistle to shreds. Not only every chapter, but almost every verse is equally made up of both. It is, indeed, the best example that could be found of Faith working by Love : working, moving, living by Love, as in its only natural element.

Let us see, then, how this is a description of the essence of Christianity : how it is that the New Creation expresses itself in these two voices, as it were, of the human soul.

I. What is meant by saying that "Faith avails?" What is the newness, what is the peculiarity ascribed to Christian morality by saying that it springs from Faith? It is this. If we wish to engage the sympathies

of man in behalf of any system of truth or of goodness, we must have something to which we can appeal, over and above the mere abstract statement of that system, be it theology, or philosophy, or morals. We read, for example, the Book of Proverbs in the Bible and in the Church Services. They are most excellent for their purpose. But no one will suppose that by them the world would be roused from its slumbers and converted to a new life. We must have something more. Example, as we often say, is better than many precepts. A picture may often teach more than many books. But most of all, any voice, or word, or act that comes from a higher sphere than we see around us — any system which appeals to our inmost feelings, to our personal trust, and love, and hope, and fear — is the standing place from whence alone the world can be moved. Call this what we will — Religion, Conscience, Faith — it is the cause of the most vehement, almost of the only vehement convulsions by which men have been startled and moved. Many an instance might be given from history of this, as it may almost be called, volcanic power

of the fire of Faith which is burning within us, sometimes for good, sometimes for evil, but always most powerful, never to be despised even by those who least wish to trust to its hidden and ungovernable forces. But we need not go farther for illustrations than its lawful and well-known use in the Faith of Christ. Here, if anywhere, it might be thought that morality, so lofty, so pure, so just as Christian morality, might maintain itself without direct appeals to the religious principle. Yet here, if anywhere, it seems true that if the preaching and teaching of morality is to have its perfect work, it must go back to something like a personal trust and faith in the unseen world. Take one well-known instance—that recorded in the Moravian missions in Greenland. I quote the words of an Indian chief, who had been, as they tell us, a very wicked man, but was then thoroughly converted. “Brethren, I have been a heathen, and am “grown old among them. I know, therefore, “very well how it is with the heathen. A “preacher came once, desiring to instruct us, “and began by proving to us that there was “a God. On which we said to him,— ‘Well,

“ and dost thou think we are ignorant of that?
“ now go again whence thou camest.’ Another
“ preacher came another time, and would in-
“ struct us, saying, — ‘Ye must not steal, ye
“ must not lie, ye must not drink too much,’
“ &c. We answered him, — ‘Fool that thou
“ art! dost thou think that we do not know
“ that? Go and learn it first thyself, and
“ teach the people thou belongest to not to do
“ those things. For who are greater drunk-
“ ards, or thieves, or liars than thine own
“ people?’ Then we sent him away also.
“ Some time after this, Christian Henry, one
“ of the brethren, came to me into my hut
“ and sate down by me. The contents of his
“ discourse to me were nearly these. ‘I
“ come to thee in the name of the Lord of
“ heaven and earth. He acquaints thee that
“ He would gladly save thee, and rescue thee
“ from the miserable state in which thou liest.
“ To this end He became a man, hath given
“ His life for mankind, and shed His blood for
“ them,’ &c. Upon this he lay down on a
“ board in my hut, and fell asleep, being
“ fatigued with his journey. I thought within
“ myself, ‘What manner of man is this?’

“ There he lies and sleeps so sweetly. I
 “ might kill him immediately, and throw him
 “ out into the forest : who would care for it ?
 “ But he is unconcerned.’ However, I could
 “ not get rid of his words. They continually
 “ recurred to me ; and though I went to sleep,
 “ yet I dreamed of the blood which Christ had
 “ shed for us. I thought, this is very strange,
 “ and went to interpret to the other Indians
 “ the words which Christian Henry spoke
 “ further to us. Thus, through the grace of
 “ God, the awakening among us took place.”¹

So it was, and so it ever will be. What cannot be effected by mere statements of truth, however true, or by mere systems of morals, however good, will be effected when they are represented in flesh and blood, in the life of a devoted servant of God, in the story of the life and death of Christ our Lord. To fasten upon this, to trust oneself to this, to be awakened by this, is Christian faith, — and on feelings such as these, or like to these, all Christian doctrine, whether theological or moral, must be based. Faith, be it for good

¹ Spangenburg’s Account of the Preaching of the Gospel by the United Brethren, § 45.

or be it for evil, cannot be dispensed with in the performance of great actions, or in the accomplishment of great works. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

II. This brings us to the second and equally important part of the Apostle's definition of Christianity — "*Working by Love.*" Faith by itself is, as we have seen, a mighty power, one of the greatest that the moral world contains. It is like the central fire of the earth, it is like the fountain of the great deep. But whether it be a power for good or evil, depends entirely on the objects to which it is directed, or the way in which it "works." It may be a volcano scattering ruin and desolation around it, or it may be the genial heat and warmth which fuses together the granite foundations of the globe, and sustains the life of every human being on its surface. It may be a torrent tearing and rending everything before it; it may be diverted into a hundred insignificant streams; — or it may be a calm and mighty river, fertilising and civilising the world. There is a faith which justifies, and

there is a faith which condemns. "Faith which worketh by love" justifies, sanctifies, elevates, strengthens, purifies. Faith which worketh not by love, condemns, hardens, weakens, destroys. Take the case, the extreme case, of faith as it appears in the great Indian empire, to which our thoughts have of late been so much turned. The religious principle, the faith in things invisible, is not wanting there,—it is strong enough to remove mountains. But it spends itself on matters of either no importance at all, or on matters which divert the mind into wrong and dangerous channels. The ordinary means and ways by which the faith of a Brahmin works, are not love, and truth, and justice; but meats, and drinks, and washings. "To eat the flesh of a cow," so we are told by those who know that strange religion well, "is the most enormous wickedness of which a Hindoo can be guilty,—a wickedness for which there is no forgiveness in this world or the world to come." To bathe in the waters of the sacred river, is a passport to heaven, which will avail though every moral virtue be cast aside and neglected. On the avoidance of this enormous

sin, on the preservation of this singular virtue, the Hindoo expends an energy, a courage, a faith which would be sufficient to convert a kingdom,—and the consequence is, that the wilder passions of his nature are, as we know too well, left either altogether unrestrained, or are actually stimulated and aggravated by the faculty which was meant to purify and elevate them. It is like any other power of the human mind, which, if fed on useless or poisonous substances, becomes unable to attend to what is useful and wholesome. There may be a gigantic memory, which lays up the most trifling details, and forgets the most important events. There may be a gigantic intellect, which wastes itself away in subtilty or degrades itself in fraud and treachery. There may be, there is in heathen countries, there is often, alas ! in Christian countries also, a gigantic faith which squanders its powers on things without profit—which turns inward upon itself instead of throwing itself into action—which works by blindness of heart, vain-glory and hypocrisy, by envy, malice, hatred and all uncharitableness.

But such, thanks be to God, is not Christian

Faith ; such is not the faith commended by S. Paul or S. John. "Faith," true Christian Faith, "*worketh by love.*" This is the great peculiarity of the Christian religion. Its faith works by love, and cannot properly work in any other way. The well, the spring, of waters, is no less strong and powerful here, than in those other false forms of religion of which we just now spoke. But, according to the doctrine of Christ and His apostles, there is but one channel in which its waters can legitimately flow, and that is the channel of LOVE. Whatever other courses it may take to the right hand or to the left, are so much diverted from this, its main stream. In this one broad channel, faith may work as it will ; it will find enough to fill, enough to fertilise, many rough corners to be rounded off, many intervening obstacles to be washed away, many winding tracks to be followed. Do not divert the faith of Christ our Saviour, that world-controlling, world-conquering faith, from its proper functions : we cannot afford to lose its aid, we want the whole volume of its waters, the undivided strength of its stream, to moisten the dry soil of our hardened hearts, to feed

and cleanse our dark habitations, to turn the vast wheels of our complex social system, to deepen our shallow thoughts, to widen our narrow sympathies, to sweeten our bitter controversies, to freshen our stagnant indolence.¹ "Faith working by love" can do this, and nothing else can ; we can neither with safety spare its motive power, nor yet without danger open another path for its energies.

Take the case of the Apostle S. John himself, who as on this day closed his long and eventful life. What better evidence can we have of "faith working by love" than in that well-known, often-repeated story of the lesson of his last days on earth? He was borne into the assembly in the arms of his friends. His whole life had, we may say, been a life of faith in the Divine Friend who sixty years before had been taken from him. In his youth he had been consumed by it, even, if we may so say, to excess—the Son of Thunder, calling down fire from heaven on those who would not receive his Master ; even in later years, if we

¹ I have ventured in these words to adapt a well-known description of intellectual energy by Mr. H. H. Vaughan, late Professor of Modern History at Oxford.

may believe an uncertain tradition respecting him, flying from the touch of one whom he thought had done dishonour to his Master's name. His countenance, doubtless, in those last days, glowed with the assurance of that faith which sustained him even in the last infirmity and decay of all outward powers and faculties. The multitude was hushed to hear his parting words. What were they? Was it, was it any of the things which we should have now sought and expected to hear? No; it was one short sentence: "Little children, love one another." In that one gush of love the faith of a life, fed as no other faith or life had been fed before, found its full and only vent. He allowed to it no other channel; he confined it within that one word; he knew that that one word was sufficient. They entreated him, as we might do, to tell them more, or to tell them something else. His simplicity was an offence to them. They could not bear to be addressed as little children. But no; he had nothing more to say. "If you do this one thing, I have told you all."

This was indeed Faith working, speaking,

living by Love, when it had nothing else by which it could work, or speak, or live. But what the ancient story tells us is also borne out fully by his undoubted writings.

Take up his first Epistle. Take that portion of it which was read this morning. Every truth that is stated is immediately turned into its corresponding duty. We have no sooner uttered the one, than we find ourselves in the midst of the other. It has been said of an eccentric philosopher of our time that his mind became paralysed when anything presented itself to him in the light of a duty. It might almost be said, in contrast, of S. John, that a truth seems to have had no force for him unless it came to him in the light of a duty. The abstract statement without its practical application is, in S. John's mouth, only half a doctrine. The whole doctrine; the complete doctrine, must be made up of both together. "*God is light.*" So he tells us, and in that short statement are no doubt bound up vast systems of philosophy and of theology, elaborate schemes of ceremonial symbolism, on which we might well wish to pause. He does not

allow us; he hurries us on to the next sentence. "*If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.*" This, whatever other conclusions may be drawn from that profound definition of the Divine nature, this is the immediate, practical, necessary conclusion which he enforces upon us. To believe that "God was light," and yet ourselves to "walk in darkness" and falsehood, was to him the worst of all contradictions. To believe that "God was light" at once cleared the world and the Church of all shadows, all veils, all dark concealments, all dishonest subterfuges, all cowardly shrinking from truth and light and knowledge.

Or again, — "*The blood of Jesus Christ His Son.*" What words are these! what a train of thoughts, feelings, consequences of all kind do they involve! From how many different points have they been approached in different ages of the world! what endless speculation as to their cause, their effect, their intention! But what is the one conclusion which the beloved Apostle draws from them?—"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son *cleanseth us*

from all sin.” “Cleanseth us,” — “makes our hearts clean,” — “gives us a clean heart within us,” — “a clean and pure heart,” such as belongs to those who “see God,” — “*cleanseth us*” — from what? “from all *sin*,” — “from all *unrighteousness*.”¹ Whatever else is or is not the effect of Christ’s blood shed for us, this is the effect on which S. John bids us fix our minds. If our hearts are not cleansed, purified, washed, then, as far as we are concerned, Christ’s blood was shed for us in vain; then the most moving, the most touching, the most awful of all events has been preached to us and wrought for us to no purpose. “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.” “Then henceforth I will live, by the grace of God, as a man should live who has been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ.” So, on reading the Apostle’s words, exclaimed a young soldier², arrested by the sight of them in the midst of a reckless course; and in that strong faith working by a love no less strong, he was cleansed from his former sins, and acted out,

¹ 1 John i. 7. 9.

² Life of Captain Hedley Vicars, p. 32.

in his life, that sudden and almost unconscious, but yet most true, most Scriptural interpretation of S. John's words.

I might go on with these examples; but most of all is the truth of the text shown in what he says of Love itself. Of S. John it might be said, if of any mortal man, that "he loved God, because God had loved him," — that he loved men, because they were his brothers in Christ. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" "This commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." "Not as though I wrote a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another; and this is love, that we walk after His commandments."¹ It ought indeed to be no new commandment now in this nineteen hundredth anniversary of Christ's Nativity. It is a custom preserved to this day in the churches of the East, that the solemn recital of belief in our most Holy Faith, is always accompanied by the brotherly kiss and kind embrace of Christian Charity. What

¹ 1 John iv. 20, 21; 2 John i. 5.

that old custom represents to us in figure, is still represented to us by our Christmas festival. It is at once the celebration of our belief in Christ our Lord, and of our love one to another. It tells us on one side of glory to God in the highest heavens; it tells us on the other of peace on earth and good will towards men. Is this union of Faith and Love anything new or strange? Is it not rather the earliest recollection of our childhood at this blessed season? Is it not the tradition of the most ancient and sacred ages? Is it not the express will of Christ Himself? So to expand our Love, that we lose not our hold upon Faith,—so to keep hold on Faith that we do not shut out Love,—may be difficult. But God forbid that we should have gone so far astray that the union of the two should be to us impossible which was the very soul and spirit of the age of S. Paul and S. John,—which is the very peculiarity which most distinguishes the Faith of Christ from every other faith in the world.

SERMON XIV.

ESSENTIALS OF APOSTOLICAL DOCTRINE.

(3.) KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

(PREACHED JAN. 3, 1858.)

1 COR. VII. 19.

Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

“THE keeping of the commandments of God.”

This is the third characteristic of practical Christianity which the Apostle gives, as meaning the same with “a New Creature” and “Faith working by Love.” And if we look at the context, we shall see that it presents a view most appropriate to the truths contained in the Festival of the Circumcision as the two other texts contained views appropriate to the Festival of Christmas and the Festival

of S. John. The Apostle has been speaking of the various classes or sections into which society in his time was divided, marriage and celibacy, slavery and freedom, Jew and Gentile. In answer to the anxious question whether the religious principles of the Gospel required any one to pass from one of these classes to the other, he answers "*No.*" In some respects one class, in some respects another, might enjoy more privileges, more advantages than the other. But in every class it was possible for the Christian to abide with God. Christianity did not render it more difficult but more easy to sustain a true spiritual life, even under circumstances which at first sight might seem most disadvantageous. The slave need not cease to be a slave because he was a Christian — nay, he might be more free than ever he had been free before. "For he that is called in the Lord, being a slave, is the Lord's freeman." So also in the yet greater distinction, as it seemed then, — nay, as perhaps it would seem to us still — that of circumcision and uncircumcision, of Jew and Gentile. "Is any man called, being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised.

“Is any called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but *the keeping of the commandments of God.*” That is to say, there is something deeper and wider than the outward distinction of Jew or Gentile. There is a means of commending ourselves to God which does not depend on the outward sign of the covenant with Him. There is an older, simpler, nobler privilege either than Jewish observances or than Gentile liberty, and that is “keeping the commandments of God.” “To keep the commandments of God” is the best kind of service—“to keep the commandments of God” is the best kind of freedom. It is the same doctrine which is still more strongly and clearly expounded in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, (which at this season, within three days, is twice read in our hearing), in which he so extends the principle as to refer not only to Jews and Gentiles within the Christian community, but also to Jews and Gentiles who lived outside of it, and even before the coming of Christ. “There is no respect of persons with God. As many as have sinned without law shall

“ also perish without law, and as many as have
 “ sinned in the law shall be judged by the law ;
 “ for not the hearers of the law are just before
 “ God, but the doers of the law shall be jus-
 “ tified.” “ When the Gentiles which have not
 “ the law do by nature the things contained
 “ in the law, these, not having the law, are a
 “ law unto themselves.” “Circumcision verily
 “ profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou
 “ breakest the law thy circumcision is made
 “ uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncir-
 “ cumcision keep the righteousness of the law,
 “ shall not his uncircumcision be counted for
 “ circumcision, and shall not uncircumcision
 “ which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge
 “ thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost
 “ transgress the law? For he is not a Jew
 “ which is one outwardly; neither is that
 “ circumcision which is outward in the flesh.
 “ But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and
 “ circumcision is that of the heart, in the
 “ spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise
 “ is not of men but of God.”

As on a former occasion, let us wonder as
 we read the Apostle's words, saturated with
 the very life-blood of the Gospel history,

yet bearing a harvest, so strange and so distant, that, till our own days, men have hardly known how to gather it in. When we are told that there is something in the law of God, and in the heart and conscience of man, which renders us independent of all outward circumstances—Is it not the very expression of Him whose life and whose teaching can be nowise better described than by saying that it is of no one class, or nation, or race? Is it not the very answer to the perplexed inquirers of later ages? We ask often now what are the limits of God's grace, and of man's salvation—what fate is in store for the good and wise of former times who had not heard of the revelation of Moses or of the Gospel of Christ. We ask these and many like questions, and we overlook the plain, decisive answer of the Apostle; or, rather let us say, we hail, as the issue out of all our difficulties, his bold, yet firm announcement of the principle which must lie at the foundation of all theories that ever the wit of man has devised respecting justification by faith or works, respecting covenanted or uncovenanted mercies. "The righteous judgment of God,

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“who will render unto every man according to his deeds. . . . Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil — of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile ; but glory and honour and peace, to every man that worketh good — to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. . . . Circumcision is nothing, nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.”

And now what lessons may we derive to ourselves from this truth, so simple, so general, as it might seem, that its direct application is often lost?

I. First, if I may follow still the course of the salutation of this season, may we not truly say that a doctrine like this is “Glory to God in the highest?” May we not thank God from the bottom of our hearts that He has allowed us to see the justice and the comprehensiveness of the law under which we are placed? May we not thank Him that He “revealed to His holy Apostles” beforehand the very principles “which in other ages were not made known unto the sons of men ;”¹

¹ Eph. iii. 5 ; Rom. xvi. 26.

which by the gradual unfolding of ages have been made known to us, but which we now see were clearly “made manifest to the Apostle, according to the commandment of the everlasting God?” God be praised, we live under a law which is not confined in its operations to our own small experience: it extends, so the Apostle tells us, even beyond the circuit of the chosen people of old — even beyond the limits of the chosen people now. Well may the Psalmist compare the law and the commandments of God to the sun moving through the heavens, to the glories of the day and the night in the natural world. “It runneth “about from one end of the heavens to the “other; there is nothing hid from the heat “thereof. There is no speech nor language “where their voice is not heard. Their “sound is gone out into all lands, and their “words unto the ends of the world.”¹ Well may the Psalmist contrast the revealed law of God with any systems of merely human speculation. “I see that all things come to an end, but Thy commandment is exceeding broad.”² It includes within its sympathy all other

¹ Ps. xix. 5, 6.

² Ps. cxix. 96.

systems ; it awakens an echo, however faint, in every human conscience ; it recognises its likeness, however imperfect, in every good act and deed. “ Of a truth we perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness is accepted unto Him.” Do not fear to acknowledge this truth, which the Apostle so fervently urges upon us. It is no encroachment on our faith ; it is one of the best proofs of its divine origin, of its universal power. It is one of the best tributes we can render to the triumph of God’s mercy and justice as revealed to us in the Gospel, that, as we read the lives and deeds of good and holy men before Christ came, both among Jews and Gentiles, we may gladly admire and honour them. We see in them the exact fulfilment of the Apostle’s description of those Gentiles who, “ not having the law, are a law unto themselves, who show forth the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile excusing or else accusing one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.” These

are they whom the ancient fathers described boldly, but not too boldly, as "Christians before Christ's coming," as men enlightened by the Word before the Word became flesh. These are they whose figures we see portrayed on the porches of the ancient churches of the East, to show that they were the school-masters to bring us to Christ. These, and such as these, are they of whom a pious Reformer once wrote, in describing the glories and the happiness of Heaven: 'There never ' has been any good man, there never will ' be any holy character, there is not now ' existing any faithful soul, from the begin- ' ning of the world even to the end thereof, ' whom we may not in the presence of God ' hope to meet beyond the grave.'

II. This leads us to the second lesson which the Apostle's doctrine teaches us, — good-will towards men, and distrust of ourselves. "Circumcision is nothing, nor uncircumcision, " but keeping the commandments of God." "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, " neither is that circumcision which is out- " ward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is

“ one inwardly, whose circumcision is not of the letter but of the spirit, whose praise is not of man but of God.” What a keen insight through all the outward shows and professions which conceal from us the true state of others, the true state of ourselves ! If it be true that even those two great divisions which existed in S. Paul’s times, might be as it were countersected and inverted by the simple test of keeping God’s commandments; if even a Jew, though seeming to be a Jew, might yet be a Gentile, and a Christian, though seeming to be a Christian, might yet be as a heathen man and a publican; if the Gentile, though seeming to be a Gentile, might yet be inwardly a Jew, and the heathen, though seeming to be a heathen, might yet be inwardly and in spirit a Christian;—how much more will it be true of all lesser distinctions by which we applaud ourselves and condemn others. How often (to take the most familiar instances) is it the case that he is not the truly educated man who is so outwardly, nor is that true nobility which is outward in the flesh; but he is the true gentleman who is one inwardly, though he be a poor man and a

peasant ; and that is true education and true nobility which shows itself, not in the appearance and the manners, but in the heart and in the spirit, "whose praise is not of men but of God." Take again the address to the Jew in the same chapter we have so often quoted : "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" "Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" Thou that thinkest thyself enlightened, tolerant, liberal, art not thou often the slave of prejudice as narrow, of blindness as dark, as those whom thou scornest and despisest? "Thou that retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and hast the form of knowledge and truth in the law," hast thou not in the meantime forgotten those higher, more ancient, more universal truths, for which the form of knowledge and truth is given? Thou that renoucest all merit in thyself, and deplorest the depravity of human nature, and confessest that the heart is desperately wicked, dost thou bear to be told of thine own faults, dost thou acknowledge thine own pride or vainglory, or malice, or envy? "Thou that seest in thy brother's eye the mote" of error,

of passion, of selfishness, "dost thou see clearly to pluck out of thine eye" the like error, or passion, or selfishness, of different shape and substance, but a beam in size and thickness, which others see far more clearly in thee than thou canst see the speck in thy brother's eye? Go on with the parallels, as few or as many as we will, and we shall still find that far deeper than our own watchwords and badges of distinction do the true divisions and unions of mankind extend. Two men may hold in words the same doctrine, yet mean by it a totally different thing. Two men may hold in words two opposite doctrines, yet mean by it exactly the same thing. "Two men may go up to the Temple to pray;" the one may have a confession, full and complete, of doctrines and of duties, of observances and of deeds; the other may stand afar off, and have a confession scanty, hardly expressed in words to himself; yet "the one may go down to his house justified rather than the other." "Two sons" may be commanded "to work in the vineyard." The first will in outward profession "refuse," but afterwards secretly repent "and go;" the second

will readily renounce his own will and agree to go, "and not go." "Whether of these twain did his father's will?"

Why does the Apostle, why does our Lord dwell on these things? Is it to unsettle the usual lines of demarcation which the course of ages has thrown up around us? to confuse the hearts of the simple, and perplex the hearts of the ignorant? Far from it. But such words do warn us against trusting to these outward tests either for ourselves or against others. We may think that we are standing when we are daily falling. We may be attacking in others the very truths which we hold, or think we hold, ourselves. We may be condemning in others the faults that they see most clearly in us. We may be closing our eyes and ears against the very lessons which we most need, from those whom we most despise or most condemn. We may be making mountains out of molehills. We may be making rough places where before all was plain, and crooked paths where before all was straight. We should, if we had lived three hundred years ago, have been slaying, torturing, burning one another. And all because

we have forgotten the simple truth, that a man is not always inwardly that which he is outwardly, and is not always outwardly that which he is inwardly.

Let us grant to the full that Circumcision is in its place a very great thing, and Uncircumcision also is a very great thing, and all that those words now represent to us are, in their way, very great things.—True opinions, free inquiry, ancient ceremonies, devout feelings—yes, even knowledge, rank, station, antiquity, “have much advantage,” “much profit,” “much every way” for the strengthening of our bulwarks and our outposts. Yet behind and within, and above them all, is the citadel of the fortress.—“keeping the commandments of God.” So long as this is ours, we are safe; if we lose this, we lose all. In comparison with this, and without this, circumcision and uncircumcision, orthodoxy and heresy, antiquity and novelty, are—“nothing.”

III. And now we come to the final conclusion of the Apostle’s maxim. It brings “peace on earth,” not only to others, but to ourselves. How often in this troublesome world, when we

that that we are ill at ease in this situation or
 at that, with these opinions or with these, with
 these persons or with these, nor we troubled
 in any way, that is, that which like a dove, then
 "would I for ever and for ever, I would not
 "go far away and return in the wilderness;"
 "far away from home, far away from my
 "acquaintance, far away into solitude, far away
 "from the just, far away into the desert, far
 "away into the grave." It is a thought of
 this kind that the Apostle's doctrine comes
 with such convincing force. No: we need not
 go far away. Here or there, the Apostle tells
 us, *circumstances* or *uncircumstances*, married or
 single, Christian wife with unbelieving hus-
 band, Christian husband with unbelieving
 wife, each could, "in the calling wherein
 they were called, therein abide with God" by
 "keeping His commandments." Our road to
 Heaven needs no tortuous winding path.—it
 runs straight as an arrow across mountains
 and valleys; it cuts through difficulties, it
 makes use of natural facilities, it brings us
 into company with unexpected faces, charac-
 ters, situations; but it is turned aside by
 none of them to the right or to the left, and

at the end it will bring us to the city where we would be. Year by year changes gather round us. We shall not be this year as we were last year. If we remain the same, yet things around us change; if things around us remain the same, yet we see those around us change, and our relative positions, thoughts, duties, feelings, change with them. But one thing changes not, and that is, the duty and privilege of keeping the commandments of God. If we have kept them before, we can keep them no less now. If the keeping of them, if the striving to keep the commandments of God, has been a "lantern to our feet and a light to our path"¹ in former times, "rejoicing the heart and enlightening the eyes;"² so we may humbly trust that it will be still, whatever changes have befallen us, whatever changes may befall us. "We go astray like a sheep that is lost," yet we may still cry with confidence, "O seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments."³ All outward habitations, circumstances, situations, shall perish; but God and His commandments remain. "They all shall wax old as doth a

¹ Ps. cxix. 105. ² Ps. xix. 8. ³ Ps. cxix. 176.

garment, and as a vesture they shall be folded up and be changed.”¹ But God and His commandments are the same. “His years will never fail;” and “the Keeping of His Commandments” will never fail—and “Faith which worketh by Love” will never fail; and “the New Creature” which thus is born within us, will live and not fail “in Christ Jesus,” who is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

¹ Ps. cii. 26, 27.

SERMON XV.

DOCTRINE OF NONCONFORMITY TO THE WORLD.

(FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY, 1858.)



ROM. XII. 2.

Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewal of your mind.

THE Epistle of to-day leads us back to those direct instances of the Apostle's practical teaching with which I began these discourses. The Apostle here brings to a conclusion all his previous address; he beseeches his readers, "by the mercies of God" which he has unfolded, to "*present a living, holy, reasonable sacrifice to Him.*" What that Sacrifice is to be, — what the worship, — what the victim, — what the life-blood which is to give it virtue, —

what the incense which is to give it fragrance,—what the feast which is to accompany it,—is the subject of the remaining chapters of his argument—the 12th, 13th, 14th, till in the 15th chapter he winds up the whole of his address with the same figure,—“*the offering up of the Gentiles, acceptable, consecrated with the consecration of the Holy Ghost.*” How and in what sense the good life of Christians, as here described, may be properly viewed as “a Sacrifice,” as “the Sacrifice” of Christian worship and of the Christian Church, I have explained on other occasions. Let us this morning take that first characteristic which the Apostle gives of the holiness and savour of the Sacrifice, namely, the *unworldly* character of the Christian life. “Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” “Be not made like to the fashion of this fleeting, vanishing age,” (so the words may be more fully drawn out according to their original meaning) “but be ye transfigured into a higher, and brighter, and more lasting form, by the renewal, the reconstruction, the re-formation of your minds.” What

then is the contrast which the Apostle draws between the character which goes along with the fashion of this world, and the character which is renewed so as to see what is above the world? Here, no doubt, as in many like distinctions, (circumcision and uncircumcision, slavery and freedom, tolerance and intolerance, nobility and vulgarity, pride and humility) the divisions of the world and of the Church—of the secular world and of the religious world—cross and recross each other in a hundred directions. Who in this congregation will venture to say whether he or his neighbour does or does not belong to the world? Who in this congregation would not, in one sense, desire to “know the world,” to be “a man of the world,” to be “on a level with the time,” to be “not behind the age?” Who would not, in another sense, at least in his better moments, desire to be above the world, to give up the world, “to renounce” (according to the old familiar words of the Catechism) “the pomps and vanities” of this wicked, this foolish, this tyrannical, this unprofitable, this miserable world? Yet, though the two classes are closely mixed up

unpious. though the two characters are closely mixed up together, even in the same person, yet still there is a truth in the Apostle's words.—there is still a truth in our common expressions.—there is such a thing as a worldly spirit, and there is such a thing as an unworldly spirit.—and according as we partake of one or the other, the savour of the sacrifice of our lives is ordinary, commonplace, poor, and base; or elevating, invigorating, useful, noble, and holy.

I. Before going into any details, let us observe that an unworldly spirit, a spirit above the world, may be seen in what the Apostle calls "the transfiguration" even of mere worldly virtues. There are doubtless gifts and graces which we do see in the world, which the world honours,—nay, more, which, if we take the common divisions of men, are sometimes seen more in the world than in the Church,—justice, integrity, truth, candour, prudence. Very few men are to be found who will not admire these; in this respect we might almost say that we cannot go wrong in conforming ourselves to the world. Yet even

here it is possible for an unworldly spirit to transfigure these worldly excellences. Unless there were from time to time examples of these gifts, with something more than a mere common force and vitality, they would themselves die away, fade, be corrupted, and lost. One high heroic instance of truth, or justice, or courage, is worth a hundred lesser cases,—the world is startled by it. Heroes and saints are indeed the salt of the world, and the light of the world,—a life is spread by them into the putrifying mass, a glory streams from them into the dark void. Their summits reflect a light which remains there when, it has vanished everywhere else; their example, whilst it makes us feel far below them, yet in a manner annihilates space and time and brings us near to them. And let us all remember also, that, in proportion to the grace and dignity given by a true, religious, unworldly spirit, even to the noblest worldly virtues, is the mischief wrought by the absence of worldly virtues in those who think and call themselves unworldly. They are indeed “the salt which has lost its savour,” fit for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of

men. We hear much of the stumbling-blocks thrown in the way of the propagation of Christianity by the unchristian lives of Christians in foreign parts. Let us remember that there is no greater stumbling-block in the way of the reception of true religion by men of the world than the uncandid, untruthful, unjust, ungenerous deeds, and words, and tempers seen among men who profess to be, and who, in a certain sense, 'are not of the world.' "There are lessons," it has been well and wisely said, "of which the world is the keeper no less than the Church. Especially have earnest and sincere Christians reason to reflect if ever they see the moral sentiments of mankind directed against them." "He is not always *of* the world who is *in* the world," (so we may again apply, as on last Sunday, the words of the Apostle,) "neither is he always *not* of the world who outwardly is *not* of the world. But he is *not* of the world who, living in it, lives above it, whose separation from it is of the heart, of the spirit, and not of the letter." The soldier who is more brave because of a higher than any earthly courage within him, the man of law who is more

scrupulously just because he has before him a higher than any earthly tribunal, the men of commerce and business—

“Who carry music in their heart,
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat,”

these are exact instances of what the Apostle means by being “transfigured through the renewal of our minds.” These are the most truly unworldly, because, though living in the midst of the furnace, its “fire has had no power upon them, nor is a hair of their head singed, nor has the smell of fire passed upon them.”

II. But over and above this transfusion of a higher life into worldly virtues, there are also qualities which, we may say, are unworldly in themselves—the very light within and from above, which gives even to earthly goodness its highest and most lasting glory. Let us briefly see what they are.

1. First is that which the Apostle himself gives us as the best example, namely, *Humility*. “Let not a man think of himself more highly than he ought to think.” In

Pagan times there was no name for this grace. The very word is a "new creation" of the Gospel of Christ. What then is true Christian humility? How is it unlike the course of the world? What advantage is it to mankind to have gained it?

We might take many tests, but let one suffice. Who is it that will best bear to be told of his faults? Who is it that we can most easily approach to correct something in which we may think that he has erred or done wrong? Is not this just the character which in the natural world is so difficult to be found?—is it not just the character which in a religious, unworldly man we may expect, or may hope, to find? Take a common worldly man, who has escaped or who does not respect the influence of religion; he may have many good qualities, but it is very rarely that he will have this one. Can you venture to tell him of his faults? Will those, whoever they may be, who think but little of God and the world to come, endure to be reminded of their faults? Is it not an affront, an outrage, that cannot be presumed upon? Had you not better meet a bear

robbed of her whelps than venture with a worldly man to take the liberty of telling him what you really think of what he has said or done amiss? But, if a man professes religion ever so little, yet professes it sincerely, there is at least one part of his nature to which you can appeal when you come to set him right. He may be prejudiced, narrow-minded, perverse; but, if he has a spark of Christian principle within him, in this respect he is bound to be, and, unless he is a mere self-deceiver, he will be, above the world; he will suffer you to lay the finger on his weak point, he will allow himself to be healed, he will let you say, "Thou art the man," and he will say himself, "I have sinned." He will acknowledge that the general sinfulness of which he professes himself guilty in the sight of God can be detected in special instances by the eye of man. Such an one, whatever may be his other shortcomings, is, so far, an unworldly character, — such an one, though unworldly, is to the world an unspeakable gift. Could we spare any that there are? Is there not room for many, many more?

2. Secondly, there is what may seem almost

inconsistent with humility, but what does really flow from it more truly than from any other source — *independence* of the world's opinion. To think little of ourselves and much of others, is the natural consequence of not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, and, in the end, it leads us to think little of the opinion which even those whose good we seek may choose to form of us. “With me it is a very small thing that I shall be judged of you or of men's judgment. He that judgeth me is the Lord.” That is a true unworldly maxim. It is safe, it is prudent, to conform ourselves to the fashion of the world ; it is safe, it is prudent, it is worldly wise, to swim with the stream, to leave the falling house, to desert the sinking vessel. It is safe, it is prudent, and in the eyes of the worldly man it covers a multitude of sins, if we avoid the stricken deer, and howl with the wolves lest they tear us to pieces also. This is the way of the world. Do this, and you will have an easy life, you will hear all men speak well of you, you will advance and move on with the great machine of which you have become a part.

But there is, thank God, another way which is not the way of the world. "There is a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen, and which the lion's whelps have not trodden." There is an old Christian virtue of which the name breathes the savour of former days, but which lingers, we trust, amongst us still. *Chivalry*,—the desire to protect the weak, and repress the strong,—the leaning to the weaker side, because it is the weaker,—the holding out against the strong, because it is the stronger ; this, as we all know, is an unworldly virtue. It has often run into excess. It is often mischievous and troublesome. It has become the subject of the most famous satire that the genius of man has ever composed. But still, even in its excesses, it is refreshing. It is edifying, even when we oppose it. We are the better for seeing and admiring it, even if we are incapable of attaining to it ourselves, or if we have to restrain its extravagances. God grant that we may always have the grace to acknowledge its own inherent excellence. It is unworldly, it is not what the world expects, but it is for that very reason what the world most needs. How invigorating

it is to see men, as we sometimes see, not in any wild knight-errantry, but in simple Christian independence of spirit, dependent on God, though independent of man, stand up against the fury of professional clamour, and against the stupidity of popular prejudice. How ennobling to see men, whether in the press or out of the press, resist the tyranny of public opinion which will not hear the other side, and do justice where justice needs to be done, and refuse the popular praise which is not due, and give the unpopular praise which is due. They have their reward, though not as others have it,—they are the lights in the distance that keep alive the spirit and the hope of those who have not strength and courage to imitate them openly, — they will be remembered when they pass from this earthly scene, if for other good words and works, yet for this above all—that “they delivered the poor that cried, and *him that had none to help him.*” They will have, indeed, followed in the steps of Him who came not to the whole, but to the sick—who came to seek and save that which was lost. He who was in the world, yet not of the world, He—with

reverence be it said, as it has been said¹, with the reverence of deep understanding of this His unearthly mission — He is the Leader of Christian chivalry, in their knightly errand against injustice, and wrong, and falsehood. “I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called “Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. . . . And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, “white and clean.”

3. Thirdly, and very briefly, let me touch on the grace which these last words suggest, — “cleanness,” “whiteness,” “*purity*.” Must we not confess that for the world, for society at large, this grace is hardly recognised? The judgment of the world, for one half of mankind, hardly seems to require it. Against the pressure of this judgment nothing but a principle which is above the world can avail. How, humanly speaking, shall we hope to stay the secret sins of uncleanness, which

¹ Maurice's Doctrine of Sacrifice, p. 301., on Rev. xix. 11—17.

undermine and destroy, with a wide desolation, the well-being of our homes, high and low, unless there are amongst us hearts which shrink from what God abhors—which do what is right and pure, not because men see them, but because God sees them . . . ? “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth ;” these are they which save us all from destruction.

4. Fourthly, there is that which lies at the foundation of humility, of disinterestedness, of every other unworldly virtue,—that which is in some sense another name for Religion itself,—*Resignation*. To mix much in the affairs of this world, its cares, its interests, its amusements, to enjoy them deeply, to grasp them keenly, to fret and chafe as they pass from us, this may not be very wrong, but it certainly is worldly. It is the natural result of having attached ourselves, conformed ourselves to the fashion, the scheme, the stir and rush of the engine of this tremendous world. Where shall we find the calmness, the serenity, the elevation of soul, which can disentangle itself from the confusion, console others, console itself, stand aloof, make its voice heard

above the roar, be tranquil in the midst of battle, and shipwreck, and perplexity, and ruin? be pure in the midst of corruption, and steadfast in the midst of the whirlpool? This is an unworldly good which even worldly men covet when they see it. This is indeed to be transfigured by "a renewing of the inward man, which day by day is renewed, though the outward man perish." It may come to a few through philosophy,—let us not deny this—but it is the very point in which philosophy most resembles religion; and, for the mass of us, it will only be through religion, through the resignation of our own will to God's will, that we shall attain that "peace which passeth all understanding." "Thou shalt hide me privily in Thy presence from the provoking of all men, Thou shalt keep me secretly in Thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues."

To have a great cause on hand, to know that it is far greater than anything which we can do for it, this is always the best check to all the vanities and vexations of the world. To feel that it is the cause of God, is a source of consolation and calmness higher still. The great King of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus,

was warned not to risk his life in battle. He answered, as an answer which was to silence all objections, "God the Almighty liveth."

III. These are the chief virtues, manifestly not of the world,—humility, chivalrous independence, purity, calm resignation. Are they disappointing? are they unworthy of the name? No; they have many great results. Let us content ourselves with two, still bearing on the same Christian salutation of which we have so often spoken.

1. What concern have they with "the glory of God?" They have this concern, (the Apostle tells us) "That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." This is one result of the attitude into which we are put by humility, by disinterestedness, by purity, by calmness, that we have the opportunity, the disengagement, the silence, in which we may watch what is the will of God concerning us. If we think no more of ourselves than we ought to think, if we seek not our own but others' welfare, if we are prepared to take all things as God's dealings with us, then we may have a chance of catching

from time to time what God has to tell us. In the Mussulman devotions one constant gesture is to put the hands to the ears, as if to listen for the messages from the other world. This is the attitude, the posture which our minds assume, if we have a standing-place above and beyond the stir, and confusion, and dissipation of this mortal world.

2. How does the cultivation of unworldly thoughts promote "Goodwill towards men?" If in one way it carries us off from men, yet in another way it brings us nearer to them. Look at the great natural divisions of mankind, the rich and poor, the clever and the dull, the learned and the ignorant. How are these to be brought together? What qualities have they in common? Will the gifts which the world most admires help us to this end? No; we must turn elsewhere for these bonds of union. Not Homer, not Shakspeare, but the Bible is the common book of all men. Not worldly powers, but unworldly graces, are the common gifts of all mankind. Why is it that the character of the brave general, whom all England at this moment mourns, comes so home to all our hearts? Not so

much because of his heroic deeds, but because of the things we have been told of the tender and thoughtful and faithful spirit which transfigured his whole career; things above our practice, but not above our understanding, not above our imitation,—doing now, we are told, as he had done always, and as we also may do always,—“*Trusting in God, and doing his duty.*”¹

Most truly, indeed, has it been said that “reason, and reflection, and education, and the experience of age, and the force of manly sense, are not the links which bind us to the communion of the body of Christ. It is rather to those qualities which we have, or may have, in common with our fellow-men, that the Gospel is promised. It is not with the strong-minded, the resolute, the consistent, but with the weak, the poor, the babes in Christ that we shall sit down in the kingdom of Heaven.”²

¹ General Havelock.

² Professor Jowett's Essays on the Epistles of S. Paul, first edition, ii. 219.

SERMON XVI.

THE DOCTRINE OF PROPORTION.

(SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY, 1856.)



ROM. XII. 6, 7, 8.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

THE doctrine of Proportion in Christian teaching and practice. This is what the Apostle here sets before us. It is stated expressly in the first verse of the text, but it runs by implication throughout.

What do we mean by Proportion? It is when things are in their right place; when one object does not unduly attract our attention above another. We know what is meant by a well-proportioned or a disproportioned figure. It is when the head is not too large for the body, or the hands or feet too small. We know what is meant by a well-proportioned or a disproportioned building. Take this Cathedral. Why is it that we feel so much pleasure in looking at it? One chief reason is, because nothing in it is out of place, or too large or too small for its place. Suppose that the pulpit, or the throne, or any one of the monuments were ten times their present size, we know that, however good they might be in themselves, they would produce an unpleasing effect, because they would be too large for everything round about them.

I. Let us apply this, first, as the Apostle applies it, to Christian practice. As we have "gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us." This is to be our rule of action. It is not enough to ask ourselves

what is absolutely right in itself, but to ask what is right under the circumstances, what is right considering our own position, our own gifts, our own calling, our own duties. It is a great thing, as we often hear it said, to have "right men in right places;" but it is also a great thing, and one which more nearly concerns our own individual practice, to have the right *man* doing the right *thing*; and the right *thing* said and done in the right *place*, and at the right *time*, and in the right *way*. A right thing done in a wrong way is often more mischievous than a thing done wrong altogether. A saying, in itself most true, loses its savour, if said at a wrong time. An amusement, in itself quite innocent, a practice, in itself most holy, a rebuke, in itself most just, will become almost wicked, if said or done by a wrong person, or in a wrong place. It is no defence to say that such a thing was good in itself, or good a thousand years or even ten years ago, or good a thousand miles off, or even ten miles off. The question is, whether it is good for us, and for our neighbours; good for us now in the nineteenth century, now in the year 1858, here in our own

homes, in our own circles; good to be done and said by us and for us as we are, and as those about us are. Congruity, proportion, fitness, are the very graces which are required for the spiritual temple, as well as for the earthly and outward temple. We are not mere isolated, separate blocks of stone. Christian society is not, if I may so express myself, a rude Stonehenge, thrown together without regard to what effect each part will have on the other. It is, like this church in which we are now gathered together, of which I just now spoke, made up of "living stones, built up into a spiritual house," "in which all the building, fitly joined together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." What in one station of life, or one age of the world, is a grace, in another station or age is a deformity; just as truly as that which would be a grace to a parish church, would be a defect in a great cathedral; or as that which would be a deformity in a great cathedral, would be a grace in a parish church.

"To everything," says the Wise Man, "there is a season, a time to every purpose under the sun; . . . a time to plant, and a time to

pluck up that which is planted ; a time to kill, and a time to heal ; a time to pull down, and a time to build up ; a time to weep, and a time to laugh ; a time to mourn, and a time to dance ; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather them together ; a time to get, and a time to lose ; a time to keep, and a time to cast away ; a time to reap, and a time to sow ; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak ; a time to love, and a time to hate ; a time of war, and a time of peace.” “Wise,” indeed, was “the Preacher” of that ancient discourse on the Doctrine of Proportion. There is a time and place for everything. How many good plans have come to nought, not from wickedness, not from opposition to what is good, but because men have tried to mend at the wrong time, or refused to mend at the right time—because men have exalted one truth, or one virtue, or one custom, however good in itself, out of all proportion to other truths and duties, and so have driven men by a recoil and reaction into an equal disproportion on the other side,—over-reverence leading to irreverence, over-strictness to over-laxity, excessive

rashness to excessive caution, excessive seriousness to excessive childishness.

Yet not only "the Wise Man" in his worldly wisdom, but our Lord and His Apostle in their heavenly wisdom, have taught us the same thing. There was a miracle of rejoicing wrought at the marriage feast of Cana; but not at the last supper in the upper chamber. There were tears shed at the grave of Lazarus; but not at the feast in the house of Simon the leper. The children of the bridechamber were not to fast whilst the Bridegroom was with them, nor were they to rejoice when He was taken from them. He in His own person fulfilled not one kind of righteousness only, but "all righteousness;" all, according to the manifold circumstances of childhood, youth, and manhood, through which it was His lot to pass; not all together, but each in its own fitting time, and place, and season, and manner. And so the Apostle, in these verses, tells us that we are to act each "*according to the gifts given to us.*" He that is endowed with the gift of prophesying or preaching, is to exercise his gift, not in any other line, but in that. He that has the gift of ministering—that

is, of active practical work—is not to rush out of his way into prophesying, but to exercise his gift in the active and only sphere to which God has called him. He that has the gift of teaching regularly and systematically, will have enough to occupy him without entrenching on the gift of exhortation, consolation, encouragement. Each of us has his own special calling, greater or smaller, more or less varied. Let us not waste our time, or mar our usefulness, by intruding into provinces which are not ours, or overburdening ourselves with labours disproportioned to our strength and powers. The very same gifts which are most useful to one station of life will be a snare and a sin to men in another station, or men in the same station under different circumstances. Any one faculty pushed to extremes, indulged to excess, ceases to be a gift or a blessing and becomes a curse. Music,—how divine and healing an art in itself, yet how distracting, how unsettling, how dangerous when it takes possession of the whole man, and leads him hither and thither without the counterpoise of either principle or pursuit. Study,—how soothing, how edifying in its

right sphere, yet how fatal if it usurps the place of the practical duties of every-day life and of important stations. Mechanical pursuits,—how pleasant as a recreation to many, how necessary as a support to the whole community, how direct a duty to some; how deeply sanctified by the life of “the Carpenter, the Son of Mary;”¹ yet how fatal when they encroach on higher responsibilities. How fatal to that unfortunate king who, in the crisis of the French monarchy, devoted himself to his favourite craft rather than to the task of saving the state. How useful to that great prince who made it the means of civilising and reforming his vast barbarian empire. How valuable, in short, are all these occupations, if they help us forward in our main work of life; but how dangerous, if they so take possession of us, as to lead us away from our proper calling, either without giving us another, or giving us a wrong one, in its place.

In the defence of the besieged fortress, of which we have read² the account within the

¹ Mark vi. 3.

² General Inglis’ Lucknow Despatch, 1858.

last few days, we are told that the courage, the subordination, the zeal of each individual of the little garrison was sustained by the awful consciousness that on him rested the safety of the whole, — a single outpost lost would be the loss of all. Even so it is with us. The assailants are many, the defenders are few; if the fortress of goodness and truth is to be saved, it must be by every one doing at his own post the work which belongs to him alone. The weak cannot do the work of the strong, the soldier cannot do the work of the nurse, nor the private of the general, nor the general of the private. What discipline effects in the army is effected in our moral duties by a sense of the Apostolical doctrine of Proportion. Every one has his own work assigned him by the Captain of our salvation. Not to do that, or to do another's work which is not ours, is to betray the whole;—a breach of discipline, a disproportionate zeal, or a disproportionate prudence, may in our spiritual no less than in our earthly warfare be as fatal, though not as guilty, as cowardice, or treachery, or neglect. Great enterprises may be marred, if not ruined; noble characters

may be wasted, if not lost, merely by the vain endeavours to do ourselves what would be far better done by others. Allow in others — claim for yourselves — a division of labour, a division of responsibility. A good master, a good servant, a good soldier, a good teacher, is made in no other way so well as by knowing what is his place and keeping to that ; not doing anything above his place or below his place, or out of his place, but by “waiting” on and in his place, whatever it be, prophesying, teaching, ministering, fighting, exhorting, ruling, learning.

II. And this leads us from the duty of doing things according to the right *station* and *circumstances* to the duty of doing them in the right *way*. Here also the Apostle indicates the true proportion of action. “He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity ; he that ruleth, with diligence ; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.” How well these words express the exact garnish and flavour with which our actions should be served up at the sacrificial feast of the Christian life. “He that giveth, with simplicity.” How greatly the value

of a gift depends on the manner of giving ! “He who gives soon,” according to the old proverb, “gives twice.” So he who gives with simplicity, that is, with singleness of purpose, without an underhand design, without expecting praise or notice, he gives twice, thrice, a hundredfold more than he who gives grudgingly, than he who gives late, than he who gives ostentatiously. One gift well given is as good as a thousand ; a thousand gifts ill given are hardly better than none. “He that ruleth, with diligence.” He that ruleth, he that hath the charge of others, he that hath the charge of a household, of a school, of a commonwealth, how can he so rule as to rule well, fitly, appropriately ? He may rule powerfully, imperiously ; he may rule so that all those below him may be afraid of him ; he may rule so that the institution may go on in apparent prosperity : yes, he may do all this, and yet he may not rule well ; there may still be wanting that peculiar method, that peculiar fitness, which will give life and substance to the whole. What is wanted is that he should “rule *with diligence* ;” “with earnestness,” with his heart and soul

in the work, "doing all that he finds to do with all his might." That is the true secret of influence, of government, of prosperity, of power, in great societies or in small, over many or over few. "He that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." How easy it is to show mercy in such a way that it shall be no mercy, and how truly has the Apostle laid his hand on the exact quality which causes kindness to be really kind, and mercy really merciful. Not tenderness, not generosity,—no; but something which we can all command—"cheerfulness;" a bright smile, a beaming countenance, a playful word, these are the accompaniments that find an entrance into the closed heart, and raise the downcast eye, and bless him that gives and him that takes.

So we might go on through every Christian act. In all things we may put the same question—Is this the right thing for *me* to do, *here*, and *now*, and in *this* way? Is this according to the fitness of life? Is it good when weighed not in the haste of the moment, but in the scales of well-balanced judgment? Is it the best way of doing it when measured not by the narrow, partial measure of our stunted,

dwarfish minds, but by the lofty, well-proportioned measure of the full manly “stature of the fulness of Christ our Lord?”

III. But there is yet one other subject to which I would apply the rule, that to which the Apostle himself first applies it,—“He that prophesyeth, let him *prophesy according to the proportion of faith.*” It is not only in practice but in teaching, and in learning, that this Apostolical doctrine of proportion is needed. It is important, first, for the preacher, teacher, expounder of God’s truth, to prophesy, to teach, “according to the proportion of *his own faith;*” not to assume feelings which are not his own, not to urge truths of which he himself does not feel the value, but to teach according to his own knowledge, his own experience, his own thoughts. But, secondly, it is important for us all so to seek, and so to find, and so to teach all truth, as not to forget what are the due proportions of the *truth itself.* Christian truth, Scriptural truth, Catholic truth, is not of one kind only, but of many. It has its lights and shades, its foregrounds and its distances;

it has its lessons of infinitely various significance and importance, some significant always, some significant at one time, some at another; some important in themselves, some of no importance except in connection with others. Woe be to us if, instead of "rightly dividing the word of truth," we confound all its parts together. It is only by following "the *proportion* of faith" that we can rightly understand and act on any part of it. We may believe correctly on every single point, yet if we view these points out of their proper connection and proportions, our view of the whole faith may be as completely wrong as if on every single point we had been involved in fatal error.

May I say, in conclusion, that this has been one chief object that I have had in view, in the discourses I have lately addressed to you from this place. It is not that I have wished to disparage creeds or sacraments, or ceremonies or absence of ceremonies, or circumcision or uncircumcision, or clergy or congregation, or anything else that God has given or that man has invented for the support and the nourishment of faith within us. All and

each of these, in their place, may be most worthy of attention, of study, of explanation. But what the Apostle teaches is that all these things are means to an end; and this end is the making of men, women, and children wiser, and happier, and better — in one word, more like Christ, and more fit for Heaven. This is the proportion of faith, as it is set forth in Scripture. Compared with this, all other things are as nothing; to this all other teaching tends; for this all the great works described in Scripture were wrought; for this all the great words set forth in Scripture were spoken. This, too, is the proportion of faith in the Church of England. Study the Prayer-Book well; see what are the blessings which we most earnestly seek from God in the Collects,—the evils from which we most earnestly pray to be delivered in the Litany,—on what points the greatest stress is laid,—what points which we might have expected to find are omitted altogether, or thrown into the shade,—what are the feelings, duties, doctrines, required of us at the solemn moments of our baptisms, our communions, our confirmations, our ordinations.

Let me ask, has this proportion been kept? Is there any considerable section of the Church which has kept it? Are there not many amongst us, who, had it been in their own power, would have exactly reversed the relations which the Prayer-Book assigns to the different portions of Christian truth?

Keep to the spirit of the Bible, and keep to the spirit of the Prayer-Book; and then we may be sure that one truth will not be unduly strained by bearing a weight which can only be carried by many at once. We may not be right in all particulars, but the general frame and structure of our minds will then be according to the due proportion of the faith of the Gospel of Christ, and the faith of the Church of these realms.

If this be a true remedy for much perplexity, much bitterness, much error in religion, much viciousness in life, at any rate it is, or it ought to be, no new remedy. Let me conclude in the words of an old divine, much respected in his day, words with but very slight alteration applicable to ourselves,—to yourselves, to myself, to every one of us.

“ My lot falling in this unhappy age, where-

‘ in the best Church and Religion in the world
‘ are in such apparent danger of being crucified,
‘ like their blessed Author, between those two
‘ thieves, Superstition and Enthusiasm,” —
(if these quaint phrases fail to express any
extremes of which we are afraid, then take
others; his meaning is still the same, “be-
tween the two extremes of opposite error”)—
‘ “seeing this danger, I thought myself obliged
‘ not to sit still as an unconcerned spectator
‘ of the tragedy, but in my little sphere, and
‘ according to my poor ability, to endeavour
‘ its prevention; and considering that the
‘ most effectual means’ our enemies have
‘ against us ‘is by engaging our zeal (which
‘ was wont to be employed to better purposes)
‘ in hot disputes about the circumstances and
‘ modes of worship, I thought a discourse of
‘ the Christian Life, which is the proper sphere
‘ of Christian zeal, might be a good expedient
‘ to take men off from their dangerous conten-
‘ tions which were kindled, and are fed and
‘ blown by such as design our common ruin.
‘ For sure did our people thoroughly understand
‘ what it is to be Christians indeed, and how

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‘ much duty that implies, they would never find
‘ so much leisure as they do to quarrel and
‘ wrangle about other trifles.’”¹

¹ “The Christian Life,” by Dr. John Scott. Epistle
Dedicatory, p. 2. (Fifth edition, 1690.)

SERMON XVII.

THE APOSTLE'S POLEMICS.

(THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY, 1857.)



ROM. XII. 21.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

THIS description of Christian warfare, of what may be called the Apostle's rule of "polemics" or "doing battle," is so well worthy of its place at the close of his great summary of Christian duties, that a consideration of its many applications may fitly conclude the subjects of which I have been speaking.

"Be not overcome of evil" — 'be not conquered by evil' (so we might more faithfully render it) — 'be not conquered by evil, but conquer evil by good.' The Apostle

here, as so often elsewhere, has before his mind the image of the Christian soldier. Nothing shows more completely how, in his time, peaceful as it was, the military character of the Roman Empire filled the whole horizon of the ordinary thoughts and topics of men, than the Apostle's constant allusions to the armour, the sword, the shield, the helmet, — the battle, the conquest, the triumph. They show this, and they show how he did not shrink from using these images, even for the most peaceful, for the most solemn, for the most sacred purposes: they show that he was not in his Epistles a different man from what he was in common life; that the sights and sounds which filled his eyes and ears in the world around him were not forgotten when he took the parchment scroll, and bade his companion write down at his dictation the words which were to comfort and strengthen, not the Roman Christians of his own time only, but the whole Church of God for ever.

“Be not conquered by evil.” This is the first and universal duty of the soldier everywhere; in all warfare, earthly as well as spiritual, spiritual as well as earthly. “Be not

conquered by evil." Courage, daring, confidence, in the face of evil, whether that evil be the evil which kills the body or the evil which kills the soul, — determination not to be defeated by it, — this is the first duty; without such spirit, without such hope, there can be no victory over the enemies of our country, none over the enemies of God.

But the Apostle goes on to express where it is that Christian victory differs, not only from earthly victory, but even from the spiritual victories of any other religion besides itself. "Be not conquered by evil, but conquer evil *by good*."

I. Let us go through the different meanings of which these words are capable. The first is that in which especially the Apostle uses them. He had warned his readers to live peaceably with all men; with all — even with the heathen Romans, even with their Jewish persecutors. He had told them that vengeance was God's, not theirs; that the only vengeance a Christian could take upon his enemy was to give him food if he was hungry, and

drink if he was thirsty. They were not to allow themselves to be overcome by his evil; they were to overcome and conquer *his* evil by *their* good. Such a victory is not what can be won in the battles of earthly warfare; there, evil must be met by evil, sword by sword, fire by fire, death by death. Such a victory is not what could be won by "them of old time," under the Jewish dispensation, who were "to hate their enemies," and "to claim an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."

But such is the victory of which the Apostle speaks, which our Saviour achieved in the highest degree, which, in their measure, Christians are to win over all their various enemies. And first over those whom the Apostle here especially mentions; those who have injured us, or whom we have injured; those who cross our path when we least expect them; those who misunderstand, who misrepresent us; those whom we cannot help regarding with dislike, suspicion, resentment. How are we to deal with these? None can pass through life without meeting such. What return can we make? What weapons of offence or defence can we adopt? It is difficult to forgive, it

is impossible to forget. Let the Apostle's words show us a way which may be better than either forgiving or forgetting. "Conquer *their* evil by *your* good." When an occasion of kindness offers, seize it; when an opportunity for telling of their good deeds, tell of them gladly; when their hearts soften, do not repel them with harshness; when the quarrel has been soothed by time or distance, do not seek to revive it. It was a wise maxim of ancient military tactics: *Always make a silver bridge for a flying enemy.* It is no less a maxim of Christian wisdom and Christian charity: Make silver bridges for those who seek to retrieve their errors, their mistakes, their wrongs. Do not raise obstacles in the way of the returning penitent, whether penitent towards God or towards man. It was an ancient maxim, too, of worldly prudence: *Look on your best friends with the thought that they may one day become your worst enemies.* It is for us to reverse this maxim, and rather say: *Look on your worst enemies with the thought that they may one day become your best friends.* Think how often you have been mistaken; how often

you may be mistaken yet again. Think how, in the warmth of your own better feelings, your hard and cold heart has melted, and you may fairly hope and believe that the same genial warmth will spread to those towards whom it is directed; and many a proud spirit that would have long met scorn with scorn and hate with hate, will be bowed down to the dust by one kind word; many a hard heart will be melted down by the morsel of bread and the cup of cold water, that would have resisted a whole furnace of angry invectives. This is the true Christian vengeance, the true Christian victory over those who wrong or offend us. Charity, no less than honesty, is the best policy, and also the noblest revenge.

II. Such is the original application of the Apostle's words: but the position which they occupy at the close of his precepts, and the solemnity of the words themselves, justifies us in giving them a wider application. "Be not conquered by evil, but conquer evil by good." How true, how wise, how consoling is this precept, when we apply it to our dealings

with evil in all its manifold aspects, in the world at large, in others, in ourselves!

Look first, in the most general view, at the evil, the sin, the ignorance, the folly of vast masses, or of those immediately around us. How is it to be attacked? How is it to be subdued? Is it by direct invective, assault, denunciation? Is every bad passion to be bearded in its den? Is every sin to be lashed into fury by stern remonstrance? It is true that there are times and places where nothing is more effectual than the burst of honest indignation against evil, than the determined courage which dares to attack sin and error face to face. All honour to those who have the spirit and the power to do it! Most useful, even at this time—most useful, may we not say, even in this congregation, would be the apparition of one who, like the prophets of old time or the wild anchorites of later times, was to come round to each of us, denouncing the peculiar sin or folly which he had marked in each of us, which was seen by all except ourselves, but by ourselves unknown till pointed out by some such stern and searching voice. Most useful

where it could safely be. But how seldom can we look for such, and how little can we calculate on any such for a continuance! Assuredly, however good a way, it is not the best; it is not the ordinary, it is not the most practicable method of taking the strongholds of sin. Elijah and John the Baptist are the exceptions, not the rule of Christian example. Few there are who can safely wield their power; few there are who will be permanently touched by it. More often by far is it found according to the homely saying, that "*There's no use in abuse. There's no proof in reproof.*" Here, as elsewhere, evil is best overcome by *good*. Good not only overcomes but "conquers." Even in earthly warfare, there is all the difference in the world between a *victory* and a *conquest*. "Victory" beats down the enemy for a moment; but he starts up again, he mutinies, he revolts, he can never be considered as crushed. But "Conquest," true conquest, can only be effectual when it settles, civilises, elevates, sanctifies those whom it has subdued. This was the manner of conquest which those great masters of the world pursued, whom the Apostle had before his mind,

the ancient Romans. They subdued, not by the sword, so much as by good laws, good works, good government, and ultimately by the glad tidings of good things which they communicated to the savage tribes from whom we are descended. And so it is always. Goodness, kindness, purity, holiness, truth, each carries its own conviction with it, melts the heart which cannot be broken; leaves its traces behind it, even when not heeded at the moment; evil not only falls before it, but is convinced, transfigured, transformed, upraised by its power. It was not through the anger, but the love of God, that the world was redeemed; it is "not the wrath of man," but the love of man, that most fully "works out in the world the righteousness of God." Meet harshness by kindness, meet uncleanness by purity, meet craft and suspicion by straightforward honesty, meet intolerance and prejudice by toleration and forbearance. The contest may seem unequal at first, but in the end we shall conquer. Great is truth, great is goodness, and at the last truth and goodness will prevail.

1. There are many examples of this mode of

warfare and of this mode of conquest. Take the case of error in belief. Consider what an endless task it would be to refute every folly and heresy in detail; what heartburning, what bitterness, every such attack leaves behind! how unprofitable to those attacked, how unprofitable to those who attack, how unprofitable to those who witness the attack! Doubtless, there are times when controversy becomes a necessary evil. But let us remember that it is an *evil*. It is overcoming evil by evil: it is an evil as undoubtedly as war or pestilence, or any of those scourges which the wisdom of man and the mercy of God strive to restrain within the very smallest limits in which they can be confined. How then can we overcome error, yet not overcome it by an evil almost equal to itself? The same rule still applies: "Conquer evil by good. Conquer falsehood by truth." Set forth the light, and the darkness will flee before it. Take care of the truth, and the errors will take care of themselves. You may destroy a hundred heresies, and yet not establish a single truth. But you may, by establishing a single truth, put to flight with one blow a

hundred heresies. If it has been always thought a privilege of Gospel truth that it was able to establish itself without persecution, it is no less its privilege now that it can maintain itself without controversy. There are two engagements made by the pastors of our Church at their ordination : the one, "to banish and drive away strange doctrines;" the other, to "set forth peace and quietness amongst all Christian people." These two engagements are reconciled in one and the same duty : "Conquering falsehood by truth." There is no more effectual mode of "driving away strange doctrine," than by stating the simple truth. There is no more certain proof that the truth has been told, than when it produces "peace and quietness amongst all Christian people."

2. Again, there is this advantage in conducting such a warfare, whether against moral evil or mental error ; that there is always, if I may so speak, a traitor, an innocent traitor, within the camp, if we knew how to address him rightly. Every wide-spread error contains a concealed truth. That is the point on which we must fasten, if we wish to overthrow the

error. In every human being there is a spark of good. That is the spark which, by bringing the light of goodness near it, we shall cause to explode, and shatter the whole fortress of evil which has been raised over it. Take any system of error, and look at it in this way: try to find out its true side; argue from that, appeal to that, grant that; and how much more convincing will be your arguments to those in error, how much more instructive and elevating to yourself, than if you opposed the whole system as a mass of unmixed falsehood! Or take any institution, any circle of men, any character that you wish to reform; how much better is your chance, if you try to find some one good or generous principle to which you can appeal, which you can, as it were, make your friend, than if you treated the whole man, the whole place, as incorrigibly corrupt! The Good Shepherd saw that the lost sheep was worth saving. God saw that there was something in man not wholly lost and depraved, and therefore He came to make the best of it, to restore it, to save it. Look at the case of any circle of men, such as is often described

in fiction, or seen in real life ; men, it may be, sunk in vice and sin, seemingly without any chance of restoration. Suddenly, perhaps from accident or from ignorance, there appears on the stage a new character, upright, pure, innocent; he moves amongst them without understanding them, and they not understanding him. On many he produces no effect, they regard him only as a victim, or as a hypocrite, or as a fool. But there will be some whose hearts are not entirely hardened, who are wavering between good and evil, or who are evil only because they have never known good. In them such a character awakens a new sense. All that there was of good sleeping within them is roused at the sight. Good rushes to meet its kindred good. It is like twin brothers, long parted, suddenly recognising each other. The half good becomes wholly good ; and by that union of good the links in the chain of evil are broken asunder, and the man, the society, the institution is saved. So God saved the world ; so by one man's righteousness are many made righteous.

III. And now for a moment turn from the dealings with others to dealings with ourselves. There also the Apostle's rule applies: If we wish to overcome evil, we must overcome it by good. There are doubtless many ways of overcoming the evil in our own hearts, but the simplest, easiest, most universal, is to overcome it by active occupation in some good word or work. It is so in the commonest forms of vice. What is it that leads to them? Is it headstrong passion, or deliberate purpose, or determined malice? No: it is, in by far the larger proportion of cases, absence of positive good. Leisure misused, an idle hour waiting to be employed, idle hands with no occupation, idle and empty minds with nothing to think of; these are the main temptations to evil. Fill up that empty void, employ those vacant hours, occupy those listless hands, and evil will depart; because it has no place to enter in, because it is conquered by good. The best antidote against evil of all kinds, against the evil thoughts that haunt the soul, against the needless perplexities which distract the conscience, is to keep hold of the good we

have. Impure thoughts will not stand against pure words, and prayers, and deeds. Little doubts will not avail against great certainties. Fix your affections on things above, and then you will less and less be troubled by the cares, the temptations, the troubles, of things on earth.

IV. This leads us to the last sense in which it is most of all true that we are called to conquer evil by good. It is not enough to rely on the good within ourselves; we must look to the good without ourselves. What that highest good is we all know. But do we sufficiently remember how in the thought of that highest good, in the communion with God in Christ, lies not only our peace and safety, but our victory over evil? In earthly warfare, we know well that however courageous may be the host, they must have a leader in whom to trust. And so it is in our spiritual warfare; we must have the example and the encouragement of the just and good who have gone before us. But, above all, we must look to Him who, above all other names, is called "Jesus," — that is, our "Joshua," our Con-

queror, our victorious Leader, the Captain of our salvation, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. It is told of the Emperor Constantine, that he, the founder of the first Christian Empire, the first of Christian sovereigns, was converted to the faith of Christ by a vision which appeared to him at the head of his armies, — a vision of a flaming cross, in the centre of which was written, in almost the very same Greek words which the Apostle here uses: "In this," or "*By this conquer.*" The story itself is encompassed with doubt, but in a figure it conveys to us a true lesson. "*In this conquer*" should still be our motto. "In this," in the Cross of Christ, the highest "good" which God has revealed to man, "in this conquer." Conquer, because the Cross of Christ shows us what is God's love to His creatures. Conquer, because it shows us what is the highest call of man. Conquer, because it shows us the strength and the firmness, the gentleness and mercy, the suffering and the victory in which, and through which, we too are to be victorious.

SERMON XVIII.

THE APOSTLE'S FAREWELL.

(PREACHED AT THE ANNIVERSARY MEETING OF THE KING'S SCHOOL,
CANTERBURY, AUGUST 5TH, 1858.)

PHIL. IV. 8.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

THE Epistle to the Philippians has a peculiar interest among the writings of S. Paul. It was addressed to the best beloved of all his converts. Of all the spots which he had visited in his movements to and fro upon the earth, there was none on which he dwelt with such fond affection as that earliest of European

churches — the first place, as far as we know, in our continent that received the faith of Christ, the first opening to him and to all future generations of the long vista which forms the history of Western Christendom. It was written also at a peculiar crisis of his own life. He was now awaiting in Rome the issue of his trial before Nero, which might lead to his death. His end was at hand; but still his course was not yet finished. The past and the future blend in nearly equal proportions. He “was in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and yet a desire to stay;” he was “ready to be offered up,” and yet “he still counted not himself to have apprehended; but forgetting those things that were behind, he looked forward to those things that are before, pressing towards the mark of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” The Epistle is then a long farewell; again and again taking leave, yet again and again turning back, as if for one last word, for one last look, to those whom he perhaps shall see no more again and yet for whom he anticipates a bright and blessed future. And now, in the words which I have just read

he has indeed come to the end. It is his last farewell: chapter by chapter, verse by verse, he has come to this; and now what is it that he tells them? what is it that he wishes for them, and enjoins upon them? We may well ask, for we may be quite sure that what he at such a moment, with his mind full of the thoughts of his separation, with the uncertainty of his ever again addressing them, what he then spoke to them, must be what every tender and loving friend would wish for every one of us,—must be what God Himself would wish for every one of us. Then, if ever, the Apostle would speak the very innermost feelings of his own heart, the very substance and end of the whole counsel of God, of the whole Gospel of Christ. Let us then hear once again what this farewell message was. And on this day of parting and returning, of coming and going,—both to him who speaks, and to many of those who hear,—it may seem to come with peculiar force; and, now, as once on another like occasion elsewhere, I may be permitted to gather up in it, as in a brief summary, the teaching which, from time to time, I have in

former days addressed to you from this place, combined with lessons especially appropriate to the present occasion.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

I. The words are indeed very simple. Perhaps we might almost have been disappointed at such a moment not to have received from the Apostle's lips some more startling and peculiar doctrine. We might have hoped to have been told something of those unspeakable things which he had heard when he was caught up into Paradise, something of those mighty warnings which made Felix to tremble, something of those glorious promises of life and freedom by which he burst asunder the yoke of Judaism. But no; his parting message is such as we can all easily understand; it appeals to our simplest and most general feelings; it breathes the very

spirit of a parting between man and man, when hand is clasped in hand for the last time, and the tongue veils, in homely and general language, the thoughts which perhaps, at a less tender moment, would assume the form of direct precept or instruction. It is so, and in this very circumstance lies its first and chief instruction. It shows us that the Apostle felt as we feel, and spoke as we speak; hearty, plain, familiar, parting words were not to his mind unworthy of a place side by side with the highest Apostolical benediction. It shows us also that however much he spent his life in journeying to and fro to preach new truths and destroy old errors, yet this was the point to which all his preaching tended—that he and his converts might be true and honest, just and pure. If they were this, then his joy was fulfilled; if they were not this, then he had preached and they had heard to no purpose. At particular moments, to particular classes, he might have other messages to deliver. But now, at the last, when he wished to address all his beloved converts at once, he had but to urge upon them that which found an echo in the heart

and conscience of each. And so it is still. Whatever else the preacher or the friend may have said, yet now that it comes to the last, he cannot do otherwise than say that to this point has tended, or ought to have tended, everything that he has ever spoken here or elsewhere. If in the soul of any human being in this church, old or young, he has awakened, or from any one in this place, living or departed, he has for himself derived any sense of justice, or truth, or purity, or honesty, or loveliness, or good report, which would not have been gained elsewhere, — then he will not have lived in vain for them, and they will not have lived in vain for him.

II. But, secondly, you see that the way in which the Apostle presses this doctrine upon them, is not by warning them *against evil*, but by urging them *towards good*. He was writing from the midst of the great capital of the Roman Empire, with all manner of sins abounding round about him; cruelty, uncleanness, treachery, to a degree unparalleled before or since in the world. Whatever things were false, and unjust, and dishonest,

and impure, and unlovely, and of evil report, were present to his eyes always. But he speaks not of these, he writes not of these, he casts them behind him. He speaks only of their divine opposites. If he could bring his converts to think of what was good, he knew full well that they could have no time, or thought, or care, or spirit, to think of what was bad. The surest means of overcoming evil is to overcome it with good. The surest means of overcoming error is by setting forth truth. How remarkably in this respect is school a likeness of after life. Not active pursuit of evil, but absence of zeal for good, is the cause of more than half the crimes and miseries which infest the world, of more than half the controversies and slanders which infest the Church. And so if we look for the cruel or the vicious boys at school, we shall rarely find them amongst those who are active in wholesome study, and active in wholesome sports, but amongst the loiterers, and the loungers, and the listless. To you and to us the Apostle alike speaks,—to you in your boyhood now, to you as you will be men hereafter,—Occupy, busy, engross yourselves

with things honest and true, lovely, of good report, and you will then have no pleasure in seeking out things unlovely and of evil report for yourselves now, you will have no pleasure or leisure to pick them out in the doings and characters and opinions of your neighbours hereafter. To expel and destroy evil by thinking and doing of good,—this is the divine scheme of Education, for it is the divine scheme of the Redemption of the world.

III. There is yet another point to be noticed in the Apostle's address. In his earnestness to enforce this truth on his converts, he leaves no stone unturned. Fearlessly and firmly, he calls upon them to think not on this or that special form of goodness, but on all. Not only things honest and things true, but things pure and things lovely—not only particular appearances of these graces in particular times or persons—but "*whatsoever* things are true, *whatsoever* things are honest, *whatsoever* things are just, *whatsoever* things are pure, *whatsoever* things are lovely, *whatsoever* things are of good report"—*whatsoever* and *wheresoever* they

might be — “if there be *any* virtue and if there be *any* praise” anywhere, without fear or hesitation they must think of these things. It might almost seem as if he had before him the growth of that great European commonwealth of nations and churches, of which Philippi was, as I have said, the first fruits, — where civilisation and religion would assume a vast complexity, and embrace a vast variety, unknown in the simpler forms of the ancient world, — where the truth and honesty of the tribes of the north would mingle with the loveliness and tenderness of the south — where images of stern rude justice on the one hand would be dashed side by side with shrinking purity on the other hand, — where the rough human virtues of the race of Japhet would be united with the divine praise and blessing of the race of Shem. On all these various forms of goodness and grace, he has bid us all to think, as his parting legacy. Nothing that can suggest a high or holy thought, nothing that can keep out a low or base temptation, can be disregarded as unworthy a Christian's notice in his passage through this wide world, over which we must pass to the land of rest

beyond. Everything which opens our minds to a better knowledge of what is noble and beautiful here on earth — every active, invigorating pursuit and taste of our own — every dear recollection of times gone by — every grateful thought of friends new and old — every truth, divine or human, firmly fixed in the heart or in the mind — is amongst the treasures which God has given to help us on our onward journey till we shall see the face of Him in whom all these things are for ever united in one. And most exactly do those words describe what should be the effect of Christian education in a place like this. From many various quarters are brought together those things just and true, honest and pure, lovely and of good report, on which you are called to think. From Pagan times as well as Christian — from ancient times as well as modern — from noble characters beset with many infirmities — from science and from art — from studies that seem but remotely to bear on Christian practice — from all these things, whatsoever they be, are your minds to derive that sense of higher things to which the Apostle calls us. There is nothing too

humble, too familiar, in our education, to be useful in keeping us from evil, in leading us towards good. There is protection even in the smile of an innocent child. There is protection in the remembrance of this beautiful and venerable place, which is yours, and will be yours, to honour or to dishonour, as long as your lives last. There is protection in the thought of the friends, the companions, the teachers, the parents, whom you would not wish to disgrace. There are glimpses of Heaven granted to us by every act, or thought, or word, which raises us above ourselves—which makes us think less of ourselves and more of others—which has taught us of something higher and truer than we have in our own hearts—which has aroused within us the feelings of gratefulness, and admiration, and love—which has taught us, or may teach us, in any sense, to remember and to imitate “whatever things are just and true, pure and honest, lovely and of good report.”

IV. And “finally,” — or, if I may take that other sense of the word, which is equally exact — “henceforward,” brethren, let it not

be said that this farewell of the Apostle is too vague, too general, to guide and guard us through life. "These things," he says, "think out, reason out;" "these things," in the next verse he continues, "do; and the God of peace shall be with you." There is a generality and a breadth about them; but there is also a precision and a depth, which fits them indeed to be the foundation and the crown of all Christian doctrine through all the changes and chances of this mortal life. He who has been trained here to think upon and to do these things, will have, both now and afterwards, the best hope of knowing what is the exceeding sinfulness of sin; for he only who has seen or thought of the excellence of truth and justice, honesty and purity, will feel the odiousness, and mourn the frequency, of untruth, injustice, and impurity. He who has been enkindled, even as a boy, with an ardent desire to achieve even any one of these graces — so delicately, so sharply defined, each from each — will best understand the purpose and the greatness of that Redemption for which God sent His Son into the world, to save us from these very sins, to form within

us these very graces. He who carries with him into after life a full sense of the wide extent of the horizon of goodness which the Apostle thus places before us, will best be able to understand the history, and the doctrine of the Universal Church, and of the true Communion of Saints. He will be best disposed to steer his way calmly, and wisely, and lovingly amidst the many various shades and forms of which Christendom is composed. He will be the most dutiful and genuine son of our own Church of England, by appreciating as none others can appreciate the inestimable value of that diversity of texture, and comprehension of differences, which no other Church has attempted, but which in ours is the very condition of its existence. He also who has had his mind trained to a keen sense of whatever things are true, and just, and honest, and pure, and lovely, and of good report, will be best able to perceive the full combination of these graces in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord. He who has most keenly felt the evil of their separation in others, will feel the most intense relief and delight in finding them once for all united there, and in that union he will

see a pledge and evidence of the truth of Christ's religion, such as the world could never have given, such as the world can never take away.

And he, lastly, who has thus been early trained in the atmosphere of a profound reverence for all these things, will, in the most literal sense of the word, have been educated and prepared for the great and final change to which all the lesser changes of the world are gradually bringing us near. There are those amongst ourselves who have known and seen how a spirit so trained does indeed seem, as the end approaches, to be drawing nearer and nearer to its natural home and resting-place. The ear may be unable to gather sounds of comfort from others, the lips may refuse to express the thoughts that are working within, the eye may fail to fix itself on the words which once gave instruction and support; but the treasure which was laid up in childhood, in youth, in manhood, remains there in an undiminished lustre; as the outward man perishes, the inward man, which has been fed on these thoughts of old, is sustained by them when cut off from all beside; and as all else

fades away, we feel, in the solitude of the sick chamber and in the darkness of the grave, that the soul which was so nurtured has but passed into the more immediate presence of that which on earth he most cherished,—into the presence, in the most absolute sense, of “whatsoever things are true and honest, just and pure, lovely and of good report.”



SERMONS

PREACHED IN TRAVELLING.



TO MY FELLOW TRAVELLERS

These Sermons are Dedicated

IN THANKFUL REMEMBRANCE

OF THE HAPPY HOURS AND GLORIOUS SCENES

WHICH, DURING MANY YEARS AND IN MANY LANDS,

WE HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TO ENJOY TOGETHER.



SERMON I.

THE LORD'S SONG IN A STRANGE LAND.

(PREACHED AT VENICE,
ON THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, 1852.)



PSALM CXXXVII. 4.

*How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange
land ?*

THE Prophets, whose writings or whose history now begins to be read in the Church Service, —Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel,—bring us to that remarkable period of the Jewish people which we call the Captivity. The word “Captivity” perhaps hardly expresses what is meant by it. It was not so much a captivity, as an exile; not the imprisonment, but the transplantation, of a whole nation. In some respects, when the first pangs of separation from their own country were over,—when the first bitter grief had vented itself in those la-

mentations, of which the pathos has never been surpassed, which Jeremiah poured forth over the ruin of Jerusalem, — it might have seemed that the change, after all, was not so greatly for the worse. The nation still survived; partly from the custom of those Eastern conquerors, who kept together the tribes or peoples whom they thus transported, (as even in the case of the Grecian colonies seen in those parts nearly a hundred years after by their countrymen, in the heart of Asia,) still more by that extraordinary vitality and tenacity of endurance which has always been one of the most remarkable characteristics of the Chosen People. Families were still united, as we see in the Apocryphal book of Tobit, which, though disfigured by later traditions, contains no doubt a genuine picture of Jewish life during this period of their history. Individuals like Daniel and his companions, and at a later time Mordecai and Nehemiah, were exalted to stations of high rank and power in the court of the reigning sovereign; their worship was usually tolerated, sometimes even held in honour, by their new masters. Unlike too as was the scene of their exile to the hills

and valleys of their own native Palestine, it was not without its attractions, even to the mind of an Israelite. They were in that queen of cities of which the fame had gone through all the eastern world, Babylon the great, the golden city, the city of many waters, the glory of the Chaldees' excellency, on the wide Mesopotamian plains where in ancient days their father Abraham had wandered and worshipped, on the shores of that mighty river the river Euphrates, the fourth river of the primeval Paradise, the boundary to which, in no very distant days, had reached the kingdom of their own princes, David and Solomon.

Yet, happy as in these respects their condition might be, glorious as was the outward scene which surrounded them, in spite of all this, "By the waters of Babylon they sat down and wept; as for their harps they hanged them upon the trees that were therein. To them that required of them a song and melody in their heaviness, they answered, 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?'" They could not forget that they were strangers; they still with

a longing heart remembered the hill of Zion; they could not forget Jerusalem in their mirth; they could not forget that the especial duties which had belonged to them as a nation, as the chosen people, were no longer theirs, that the holy and beautiful house in which their fathers worshipped was burnt with fire, that those amongst whom they dwelt had no sympathy with the thoughts which were to them most dear and cherished.

I. It is this feeling which renders the history of the Exile or Captivity capable of such wide application. It is, if I may so say, the expression of God's condescension to all those feelings of loneliness, of desolation, of craving after sympathy, which are the peculiar and perpetual lot of some, which to others are only temporary, but to which all, under any circumstances, are liable from time to time. The Psalms which express, the prophecies which console, the history which records, these sorrows of the exiled Israelites, are the portions of Scripture which, if only as the echo of our own thoughts, have again and again sounded gratefully to the weary heart

and lonely sufferer. Want of friendly sympathy, the bitter pain of eating the bread of strangers, the separation from familiar and well-known objects,—though earthly griefs, and depending not on the things which are eternal and invisible, but temporal,—are yet not below the notice of the Most High God, who is the King and Shepherd of Israel.

There are times when it is God's will, no less than man's, to let sorrow have its perfect work, when Rachel is to weep for her children and refuse consolation, when the deep sighing of the poor enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Of all true sorrow, if rightly borne, it may be said as truly as of the Israelites in the Captivity, "They who sow " in tears shall reap in joy. He that now " goeth on his way weeping, shall doubtless " come again with joy, and bring his sheaves " with him."

II. So far the lessons of the Captivity are of general application. But, considering under what circumstances the present congregation is gathered together, there is a more specific

application which it may bear for us. From causes indeed most unlike to those which collected the Israelites by the waters of Babylon ; not from captivity or conquest or exile, but from all the various motives which in these peaceful days attract men to distant parts, from the pursuit of pleasure or of knowledge, of health or of rest, from necessity or from accident, we are yet so far in the condition of the Israelites, that we are all of us absent from our natural homes, and most of us from our accustomed pursuits and duties and worship. We are all of us under a separation from ties with which few of us can safely part ; a separation which, however desirable, however useful, however necessary it may be and perhaps is in each particular case, however counterbalanced by far greater good, is yet in itself for the time an evil to us, as it was to the Israelites, because it is a temptation to forget those highest truths which are closely bound up with the familiar sights and sounds, the engagements and duties, of our own native land.

Let us ask then, in a somewhat different sense from that in which the question is asked in the text, "How shall we sing the Lord's

song in a strange land?" "How shall we keep alive, how shall our present absence from home be made to keep alive those thoughts of God and of our highest interests, which, in the ordinary course of things, must come to us through channels so very different?"

And this question may perhaps best be answered by recurring once more to the case of the exiled people of Judah.

1. First, they never for a moment forgot that they were Israelites. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." "Three times a day their windows were open," not to the broad rolling waters of the river Euphrates, or the boundless plains of Asia, or the gorgeous towers of Babylon, but towards their own Jerusalem. There, more than ever before they felt their hopes, their pleasures, their duties to lie; there they looked forward once more to a reunion with each other and with God; and there, with a belief stronger than in any former time, they trusted to see God's promises fulfilled, if not to themselves at least to their children and children's children. So in like manner we, separated, as I have said, by whatever causes, whether for a longer or shorter time,

from our fathers' home, ought never to forget that we are Englishmen. However freely we may admire, and enjoy, and sympathise with, the works and the virtues of foreign nations; however great the charm of their scenery or their history; yet it is certain that these are not the special means which God has laid out for us to do His work on earth. There is no need of pride, or prejudice, or narrow-mindedness, to keep up our national feelings. We have simply to remember that by the act of God Himself we were born and brought up to the duties, the privileges,—the dangers, if we will, and the temptations,—but still to the mixed condition of good and evil which is the inheritance of that great country of which we are the citizens, in which the larger portion of us must live and die, to which the best affections of all of us turn as surely as did those of the Israelites to Jerusalem and Zion. The thought of home, always valuable, is doubly so in foreign parts, where we are removed from its influences; anything which brings to our minds that to its duties and its cares and its worship we must sooner or later return, will act as a

blessed restraint in many an unexpected temptation, will encourage and comfort us in many a weary wandering, will elevate and concentrate many an hour of leisure and enjoyment and instruction.

2. But, secondly, the Israelites *were* enabled to “sing the Lord’s song in a strange land,” by the very fact of its strangeness. Their Captivity was not sent to them in vain. Not only did it revive, as often happens in the loss of good, the love of their country to a degree far beyond anything which had been before known,—for, amidst all the noble qualities of earlier times, we feel that the unshaken patriotism of Ezra and Nehemiah, and of the Maccabees, was peculiar to the times after the Captivity,—not only did it effect this, but, doing this, it enabled them to see more clearly the higher and wider revelations which God had in store for them. The gathering in of the Gentile nations, as we read in the later portion of Isaiah; the view of the world as a whole, such as appears in Ezekiel and Daniel; the belief that God’s providence watched not only over the chosen people, but also guarded with special care the fortunes of

the other great monarchies of the earth ; that there was an angel not only of Judea, but of Chaldea, of Persia, and of Greece ;—all this was impressed first upon them during their captivity. And who will venture to deny that it was through the new imagery and new scenes and new ideas which the Captivity suggested, that God brought home these great truths to their minds, as surely as through that same Captivity the Chaldee dialect became part of the sacred language, and the winged figures which recent discoverers have seen on the walls of Nineveh furnished the outward form of the magnificent visions of the later prophets?

If this was permitted to them, if, even within the narrow bounds allotted to the ancient Israel, God's truth was thus set forth, the Lord's song was thus sung, in the language and images and thoughts of the strange land of Babylon, how much more is it permitted to us, the heirs of a better covenant, whom a higher truth has made free! Shall we pass through the varied scenes, the successive ages, of nature, of art, or of history, and not feel our view enlarged, our minds more en-

riched, our hearts more open to receive the whole counsel of God? Shall we look on the noblest and loveliest sights which this earth can give, or be carried back into the distant past, into the very presence of great events which once shook the world, and not be raised above the petty cares, the selfish prejudices, the mischievous because exclusive and all engrossing interests which beset us in our own narrow spheres? Shall we look on the monuments, great even in decay, of what courage and skill and human resolution can avail against time and chance and the elements themselves, and not receive a deeper impression of the power and freedom which the grace of God has granted to the will of man? It may be so; it may be that the thoughts which illustrious scenes suggest are too transient, or too familiar, to affect the current of our lives. Yet it need not be so. Every new idea conceived, every ancient fact more fully realised, every fresh combination of natural or moral interest, is, if rightly used, another note added to the harp of Israel, another strain added to the song of the Lord, which is as the voice of many waters. We shall return,

if God so will, from our several enjoyments to our several duties, to resume once more our onward voyage over the waters of this troublesome world. It will be a help not to be wholly despised, if we can carry away with us any recollection which may cheer us forward, any bright image which may light up a dreary future, any train of lofty thoughts which may sweep across the course of our lower passions. Let us cherish any remembrance which will suggest to us, if only by way of illustration, on how small a vantage ground against the force of outward circumstance and fate what glorious structures may be raised ; how little depends on our situation, and how much upon ourselves and the use we make of it ; from beginnings how slight, from calamities how dark, the mere sand-banks in the sea, the last refuge of despair, may rise the proudest, and if the end had but answered to the beginning, the most durable of the works of man.

3. One general lesson yet remains. It was in and through the Exile that the hearts of the Israelites were turned, as they had never been turned before, to the wor-

ship of the One Eternal God. Up to this time, as we read in their history from Moses downwards, it had been a continual struggle; the calf of Egypt at Mount Sinai, the star of the God Remphan in the wilderness, the altars of Moloch in the valley of Hinnom, the worship of Astarte under every green tree, the worship of Baal on every mountain top, had been a long succession of temptations into which they fell as fast as they recovered. But from this time, whatever else might be their sins, they never relapsed into idolatry; though seven other devils in later times came in, this one master devil was cast out, never to return. Partly this arose from the natural tendency which all affliction has to lift the mind to God: "Before they were troubled they went wrong; but now they kept His commandment." But it was much more because this trial, unlike any previous affliction, turned them away altogether from the outward objects on which they had hitherto rested; the hills, the groves, the rocks, the very ceremonial of their own divine Temple, which had all ministered in turn to their former weakness,

were far away. Being now without any outward or local form of worship, they were thrown back on themselves, on their own hearts and consciences, to hold communion with Him who had thus declared to them, by the most awful dispensations, that the Heaven was His throne, and the earth His footstool. "Where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all these things hath mine hand made, and all these things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." And hence it was that from the time of the Captivity dates, not indeed the first use, but the continual, frequent, earnest use of prayer to God. Prayer was now literally their only morning and evening sacrifice; now for the first time do we hear of "men kneeling upon their knees three times a day," and praying to God as their habitual practice; now for the first time houses of prayer rose by the riverside, to supply the want of the mighty Temple and its brazen sea; now more emphatically than ever before do we hear of

faithful worshippers "setting their faces unto "the Lord their God, to seek by prayers and "supplications that He would hear and for- "give, hearken and do, for his own sake."¹

What the Israelites learned by their sore affliction, by the overthrow of their Temple, by their exile from their country, that may we in some measure learn through our partial and voluntary separation from those outward forms in which we have been from our youth up accustomed to worship God. May we, as we pass through various countries, and observe their different forms of faith and ritual, neither be tempted to think all forms useless and indifferent; nor yet, on the other hand, be induced to adopt or crave after what to us would be needless and fruitless, if not absolutely harmful. May we be rather led to grasp more firmly those higher truths which we and they alike hold; to look back, as did those scattered Israelites, to "the common rock whence they all were hewn, to the common pit whence they all were digged;"² to remem-

¹ Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2. Daniel vi. 10; ix. 3. 19.

² Isaiah li. 2.

ber that those truths of God and Christ, of life and death, of duty and holiness, which are the most universal, are also the most important. May we, as our recollections of home become more distant, as our means of external worship become less frequent, be driven more and more upon ourselves; turning to God in our private devotions, not the less but the more earnestly, because our public devotions are interrupted and uncertain. May we take care that the inner house of our hearts be pure and clean, with its windows open to the heavenly Jerusalem, in proportion as the outer house of God's worship is removed from us, or closed against us. And if not only the usual means of outer worship, but also the usual means of the inner and higher worship of God in the service of our brethren is of necessity for a time suspended, yet this very suspension may remind us that there is no time or place where the kind word, the thoughtful act, the pure intention, is or can be thrown away. He who went forth before His people through the wilderness, He whose way is in the sea and whose

paths are in the great waters, He in whose sight all nations are as the small dust in the balance¹, He is with us whithersoever we go, to guide, to judge, and to reward.

So travelling, we shall be drawing nearer to our fathers' home; so learning and so enjoying, we shall return with wiser heads, and cleaner hearts, and more active hands, to our accustomed duties; so worshipping, we shall better know how to pray, whether in public or in private, to Him who is worshipped neither at Gerizim nor at Jerusalem, but everywhere, by those who worship Him in spirit and in truth², in deed and in heart.

¹ Isaiah lxiv. 11; xl. 15. Psalm lxxviii. 7; lxxvii. 19.

² John iv. 21.

SERMON II.

S. PAUL AT ROME.

(PREACHED IN THE ENGLISH CHAPEL AT ROME,
ON THE TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, 1852.)



PHIL. I. 9.

*I pray that your love may abound yet more
and more in knowledge and in all judgment ;
that ye may approve things that are excellent ;
that ye may be sincere and without offence
till the day of Christ.*

LET me briefly notice the peculiar claims on our attention possessed by the Epistle to the Philippians, from which the epistle of this morning was taken.

I. I will not now dwell on the general interest which attaches to it as the farewell address of a beloved friend and teacher,

who is, or appears to be, on the eve of some great change in his life, whether those lesser changes which attend on the partings and separations of those who have been near and dear, or that great change which awaits us all in the hour of death. The expression of such a feeling is common to a great extent to this Epistle, and to those which are addressed to Timotheus. But the peculiarity of the farewell of the Philippians is that it looked forward to a dark future; to a future fraught with that uncertainty and suspense which is much more trying than known or expected evil. A great crisis, but of doubtful issue, was at hand. The trial for which he had been long waiting seemed to be finally approaching. The two years during which he had "lived in his hired house, receiving all that came to him, no man forbidding him," were drawing to an end; whether the result would be death, or further imprisonment, or release, — and, if release, whither he should go; whether forwards to the remote West, to the distant and unknown Spain, according to his long-cherished intention, expressed five years before in the Epistle to the Romans, or whether

he should return to his beloved converts in Asia and Macedonia, all this was wrapt in darkness. He was in a strait betwixt the two; having a desire to depart and be with Christ, yet feeling it needful for him to abide with those who leaned on him for support and advice. And yet, as he looked forward to the end, he felt that "he had not already attained, or was already perfect;" he "counted not himself to have apprehended, but he pressed forward and followed after the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," "if that by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, if that he might apprehend that for which he was apprehended of Christ Jesus. This feeling, contrasted as it is with the fervent all-absorbing energy of the earlier Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians, or with the settled calm of the second Epistle to Timotheus, ("Henceforth I know that there is a crown laid up for me,") brings before us an aspect of the Apostle's mind in which few will not recognise something akin to their own thoughts. It places him before us, not merely as the great champion of Christian truth and freedom, as the ruler and

teacher of all the Churches, but also as the Christian man struggling with the same doubts and uncertainties of knowledge and of resolution that belong to all of us; facing them manfully, wisely, cheerfully; yet still feeling them, and troubled by them, and not ashamed to confess them before God and his brethren, in the full consciousness that they were not beneath the notice of God, and that from his brethren he should receive, in their returning tide of sympathy, the best support and consolation.

This, then, is one point of view from which we should approach this Epistle; this is one circumstance which, as it were, conciliates us towards the Apostle even before we examine what he has to tell us. The voice of God which speaks in him comes not like the oracles of heathen times, through the rushing wind that sweeps the leaves of some ancient forest, or inarticulate sounds or signs of inanimate images or dumb animals, but through the living human sympathies of one who is of like flesh and blood with ourselves. It is a pledge that what he tells us is not a mere dead letter graven in tables of stone, but is

indeed "the word of God, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing us to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and a discoverer of the thoughts and intents" of each individual heart.

II. And if we follow out the circumstances of the Epistle still more closely, as surely we may be allowed, this feeling will be deepened yet more and more. Breathing, as it does in a peculiar manner, his thoughts of himself, his personal affection to his converts, it also breathes, not indeed to the same degree, but yet beyond what is the case in his other Epistles, the spirit of the time, and the place from which it was written. It requires no Paley to prove to us that it came from the great Capital of the ancient world, from the midst of Cæsar's household, from the apprehension of the trial before Cæsar to whom he had appealed, in the midst of his bonds and of his defence.

It is not without its manifold uses to remember that, amidst the dim and wavering traditions of later times, one figure at least stands out clear and distinct and undoubted,

and that this figure is the Apostle Paul. He, whatever we may think concerning any other Apostle or Apostolic man in connexion with Rome, he, beyond a shadow of a doubt, appears in the New Testament as her great teacher. No criticism or scepticism of modern times has ever questioned the perfect authenticity of that last chapter of the Acts, which gives the account of his journey, stage by stage, till he set foot within the walls of this city. However much we may be compelled to distrust any particular traditions concerning special localities of his life and death, we cannot doubt for a moment that his eye rested on the same general view of sky and plain and mountain; that his feet trod the pavement of the same Appian road; that his way lay through the same long avenue of ancient tombs on which we now look and wonder; that he entered (and there we have our last authentic glimpse of his progress)—entered through the arch of Drusus, and then is lost to our view in the great Babylon of Rome.

It is not merely for the pleasure—great as that pleasure is—of recalling this link, slight

though it be, between ourselves and the first ages of Christianity, that I venture to speak of the Apostle thus. But, first, there is always a use in being reminded that if we are obliged to doubt much, we are not therefore obliged to doubt all; and, secondly, it is of importance to remember that the only Apostolic character which the New Testament itself thus brings into direct connexion with the oldest Christian history of Rome and of Europe, was the Apostle above all others whose lessons are of the most comprehensive and universal application to all our circumstances, whether as nations or as individuals. He was the Apostle of the Gentiles, of the Gentile nations who were still unborn, as well as of those who were actually gathered round him in the great metropolis. Let us once more receive from his hands, as did the Philippians, those words with which the epistle of this day opens, and which do, in fact, contain the substance of the whole: "I pray that your
"love may abound yet more and more in
"knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may
"approve things that are excellent; that ye

“ may be sincere and without offence till the
“ day of Christ.”

III. So he wrote, as we have seen, from the midst of his uncertainties; from the midst of the metropolis of the old heathen world, in the full view of danger and of death for himself, with the consciousness of what that old heathen world was one day to become through the preaching of his Gospel.

1. Let us consider the words as his advice to us in the midst of those individual trials of which I first spoke; those in which he himself shared, and which, therefore, were as vividly present to his mind as they can be to any one (as who has not, from time to time, in some measure or other felt them?) —to any one who now reads or hears them. Difficulties of conscience, difficulties of situation, conflict of duties, uncertainty whether “ we have apprehended rightly,” fear “ lest we should not attain unto the resurrection of the just;” all these things, in various shapes and forms, meet us all everywhere. What is the prayer which rose in the Apostle’s mind at such moments? “ I pray

that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." The words are so simple and familiar, that we perhaps almost pass them by as of no peculiar signification. Yet observe what they say and do not say. They do not lay down any special rules; they speak, as we should say, only in generalities; they leave a wide field open for us to wander to and fro unchecked, they guide us into no compact system, they place us under no fixed discipline, they encourage no peculiar class of feelings or expressions. "Love," "knowledge," "judgment," these are words, it may be said, of uncertain sound, hardly fitted for those who would prepare themselves heartily for the battle. Yet is it indeed so? Was the parting wish and prayer of the suffering Apostle for his sympathising converts without any special signification? Was there nothing in it which distinguished it from what they might have learned from a Jewish Rabbi at Jerusalem, or a Stoic philosopher at Athens? There was just

that which distinguished the aspirations of a Christian Apostle from all besides; from all that had ever gone before, from how much, alas! of what has followed since. "That their *love* might abound more and more in all *knowledge* and *judgment*." It is the prayer, the hope, the belief, that these two things might go on hand in hand, the one growing with the growth of the other, which constitutes the peculiar force of the Apostle's expression. Not merely that their love might abound, not merely that their knowledge and judgment might abound; nay, not merely that their love and their knowledge might both abound; but that their love should abound in and through their knowledge and judgment; that the more loving they were to God and man, the more they might have an increase of knowledge and judgment to know how that love should be exercised; that the more they learned to sift and discover for themselves "the things that were more excellent," the more they might be "sincere" and transparent, without guile, and "without offence" in the sight of the All Holy. There was much that they would not under-

stand as yet, much that, so long as this mortal body hung around them, they never could understand. Yet this was the condition of their being,—“To be in a strait betwixt two,”—“to count not himself to have apprehended,” was the lot of God’s most favoured Apostle. Uncertainty, not certainty, faith, not sight, is the pathway of the Cross of Christ; lightening indeed ever more and more unto the perfect day, but still leading us up a steep and rugged hill, whose top is veiled in cloud. “Nevertheless,” in that upward pathway, “whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule,” and let that rule be the one here laid down by S. Paul, that love and knowledge *can* grow side by side, that devotion and tenderness can be combined with an honest desire to “prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.” It is a doctrine of Scripture as well as of reason, that in all human things there is much good and much evil; we are bound by God’s providence not to take any one person or party or institution indiscriminately as a whole, but to try and “approve those things which are excellent” in each,

without approving all the rest. To receive all, or to reject all, is equally contrary to the spirit of S. Paul, whether in his life or in his writings.

(2.) Such are some of the thoughts which the most general view of the Apostle's prayer suggests; how much more when we look upon it as a prayer whose form and shape extend with the extension of the circumstances under which it was first uttered! "The love and the judgment" which he asked for his Philippian converts, were to guide them through the troubles and trials of the first generation of the Church,—well needing, as our Lord had said before, all the simplicity of doves, and all the wisdom of serpents. Jewish narrowness and heathen licentiousness and wild Oriental superstition, mixed in a thousand combinations, were the things out of which they had to "approve those that were excellent," and reject those that were evil. For them that prayer was uttered, and its fulfilment is in great measure to be found in the Christian truths, the Christian institutions, which out of that vast confusion have been handed down to us. But the elements

of that first confusion still survive the Apostle's time; and, if it were possible for him once more to look over the troubled scene of this stormy world, if he could see the complicated mass of old and new, of knowledge and ignorance, of faith and doubt, of Greek and Jew, barbarian and Scythian, reproduced in other forms, yet still with the same conflicting principles, would not the same prayer still be offered up? would he not still look on our trials and duties with the same calm, cheerful, constant eye,—not in despair at the victory of evil, nor yet in overweening hopes of the triumph of good, not in fear of the growth of knowledge, still less in forgetfulness of the divine excellence of love,—but with the deep persuasion that in those who walk honestly, faithfully, and sincerely, in whatever state of life, “He who has begun a good work in them will perform it till the day of Jesus Christ.”

Love without knowledge, and knowledge without love, judgment without sincerity, and sincerity without judgment, still need his rebuke as they did then: to thread our way through the mingled maze of truth and error, of good and evil, with which this world

abounds, is still the task which he places before us. He, as he saw the divisions which even then had begun to rend the Christian society, could rejoice that whether "in truth or in pretence," whether by those who opposed or those who adhered to him, "Christ was preached." He looked over the many discordant elements of good which the world and the Church then exhibited. He saw the sense of justice, courage, and truth which still lingered in the better spirits of the heathen empire, the good centurions who befriended him, the upright magistrates who protected him, the poets whose wisdom he did not refuse to quote. He saw the "zeal, not according to knowledge," but still rousing his eager sympathies, to which he bore witness in the Jews, his brethren after the flesh. He saw the new and ardent love of his own converts, for which he "gave God thanks always in every prayer," yet not without an earnest hope and exhortation that it might "abound in all judgment," and that their "moderation" as well as their love might be "known unto all men." He saw all these several mighty gifts and graces which God had sent into the world;

he "would not be brought under the power" of any one of them, he would not surrender his own convictions, "not for an hour," even to those who seemed to be of the greatest weight; but he did not fear, in the midst of all these conflicting interests, to make that well-known final exhortation to his converts, —that whatsoever things were true, whatsoever things were honest, whatsoever things were pure, whatsoever things were lovely, whatsoever things were of good report, on these things they were boldly to think, these things they were faithfully to do. As with the prayer which I have read for my text the Epistle opens, so with this charge it closes. It is the last counsel which he gave to the Philippian Church, and through them the last charge which he gave to the Church at large. "These things," he adds, "which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do, and the God of Peace shall be with you." They were seen united in him; they have rarely, if ever, been seen united in equal proportions since. May it be our endeavour so to learn, receive, hear, and see them, if not in others, at least in him; and in that still

higher union of all things just and true with all things pure and holy, of which he was only the imperfect follower; and then we shall indeed find that the "God of Peace will be with us, keeping our hearts and our minds with the peace which passeth all understanding, through Jesus Christ our Lord."¹

¹ Phil. iv. 7, 8.

SERMON III.

MOUNT SINAI IN ARABIA.

(PREACHED ON MOUNT SINAI, IN THE CONVENT OF S. CATHARINE,
ON THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT, 1853.)



GAL. IV. 25.

This Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia.

WHATEVER may have been the Apostle's meaning in the use of these words thus occurring in the Epistle of this day, every one here will have felt, I am sure, that they have come home to us with a force with which they never came before, and will never come again. "This Agar, this rocky desert," so he seems to play upon the double meaning of the word, "is Mount Sinai in Arabia." And here we are assembled for the first, and probably for the last, time in our lives, within its precincts.

In a very few words let me speak of those thoughts which we ought to desire to carry away with us from such a scene. Setting aside all questions of topography or criticism, for which this is not the time or place, let us ask what to us is the everlasting lesson conveyed by the events which these mountains witnessed, what are the reflections which the sight of these scenes ought to deepen.

First, we are reminded more forcibly than we can ever be again, of the delivery of those commandments which we have known from our childhood, and which the whole civilised world has now for centuries known, as the first and simplest and most universal code of morals revealed to man. Those Ten Commandments, which we have just heard read in our service here, are honoured not by our own faith only. For their sakes the three chief religions of mankind regard this spot, and this spot alone on earth, with equal reverence. What is it which we were intended to learn from this awful promulgation of this simple code? It is a lesson, old as that code itself, and well known to all of us, but one which we are too apt to forget,

that, amidst all other differences, the first eternal principles of Moral Duty are the foundation of all Religion. We recognise it in words; do we recognise it in deed? Do we remember that if our faith is to be founded on a rock, not to be disturbed by trials or difficulties from whatever quarter, it must have its foundation on our firm adherence to the laws of right and wrong which God through His word or through our consciences has set before us? Do we, in our intercourse with those around us,—especially, I may say here, with those around us who belong to a different faith from ourselves,—endeavour to make them feel that justice, truth, and purity are essential characteristics of the faith and manners of the distant countries and churches from which we have severally come to these wild regions? Do we at least abstain from the contrary; do we endeavour to remove the impression, which they too often receive from us, that Christianity is distinguished from Mahometanism, not by its superior goodness, not by its greater attention to those great lessons of duty which they profess to hold, and often do hold in common with us,

but only by its superior civilisation and more refined vices?

Secondly, within these mountains was first authoritatively proclaimed, so far as records human or Divine extend back, that belief in One only God which has never since died out of the hearts and minds of men. "God said, I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other Gods but Me." We who have come out of Egypt, from that same Egypt which the Israelites left, know what was the contrast which these words suggested. We know the many forms, sublime or grotesque, in which the Divinity was there presented to the human mind, and we can the better understand what must have been the effect of that first revelation of the Unity of God in all its freshness and novelty which is now to us so old and so familiar, so impossible to conceive otherwise. Would that we could carry with us an impression as lively of the inexhaustible lessons still conveyed by that one simple truth! Would that our harsh judgments could be restrained, our impatience checked, our selfishness broken down, our passions controlled, our waste of time and life

in worthless or unworthy objects corrected, by the thought that there is One in whose hands we are, who cares for us with a parent's love, who will judge us hereafter without the slightest tinge of human infirmity, the All-Merciful, and the All-Just.

And lastly, for a moment let us dwell on that view of Mount Sinai which in the text and elsewhere is most prominently brought forward in the New Testament. Remember not only what we have gained by that which remains to us of the Law of Sinai, but what we have gained by our deliverance from that which it once gave, but which has since passed away. If to that ancient people who once were gathered in these valleys the simple faith and simple code of the Mosaic law had to be guarded by an elaborate ritual and by a ceremonial bondage from which Christ has set us free; if the awe which invested these mountains and the scenes enacted upon their summits has now been exchanged for the freedom and love with which we are taught to approach "the Mount Zion" through "Jesus, the mediator of a better covenant;" let us give thanks to Almighty God for this His

mercy to us and to the whole race of mankind. Let us remember thankfully, as we pass through these sacred places, that our religion is not bound up with this or that spot, this or that tradition. From this, as from all else that gendereth to the ancient bondage of times and places, and days and seasons, we are free; free to enjoy and to be instructed by what has been, free to enjoy and to be instructed still more by what is and is to be. God grant that we may use this freedom rightly. May we remember that the very object for which it was given us was to enable us to live more justly, to think more wisely, to feel more purely and more devoutly,—and so, whether here or elsewhere, all that we see or hear, all that we enjoy or suffer, may minister more and more to that end for which every one of us was sent into the world; the end alike of the Law and the Gospel.

SERMON IV.

CHRIST ON EARTH AND CHRIST IN HEAVEN.

(PREACHED AT JERUSALEM IN THE ENGLISH CHURCH
ON THE SUNDAY BEFORE ASCENSION DAY, 1888.)



JOHN XVI. 28.

*I came forth from the Father, and am come
into the world: again, I leave the world, and
go to the Father.*

THESE words express, as we all know, what in theological language has been called the union of the two natures, the divine and the human, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. But they also express, what indeed that doctrine itself expresses when turned into practical language, many other thoughts on which it is profitable to dwell; here, as in a thousand

other cases, the words of Scripture awakening many thoughts and suggesting many lessons, besides or instead of the single truth which they convey when turned into merely human language. It is the difference between the sight of the actual place and that place known only through descriptions or pictures. The picture or the description may give an accurate representation of the form, the outline, and the colour of the place, as it appeared at the moment when it was described or delineated. But it is only the actual place itself which can catch the lights and shades of the very sky and atmosphere, and which can call up the feelings, the associations, the convictions that are naturally engendered by a recollection of the events that have passed over it. So in the case of the verse I have just quoted; look at it in the light of the time when it was first uttered, and instead of its dimensions contracting they will grow larger and larger. What then was their original object? It was to prepare the Apostles for that greatest of all losses, the loss of the Friend, the Guide, the Comforter, who had been with them for the last three years, on the mountain and the lake,

in the city and the desert, in joy and in sorrow. That Presence, which had been to them the life of their life, was to be withdrawn from them. The Cross, the Sepulchre, and lastly the cloud on the hill at Bethany would receive Him out of their sight. Where should they look for the future? how should they look back on the past? To soothe, to elevate the feelings which this great change would occasion, these and many like words in the last discourse were intended.

I. First, what they had already enjoyed was theirs for ever; "He had come into the world from the Father." What they had seen, and heard, and handled with their hands of the Word of Life, no future absence could ever tear from their hearts or their memories. The world which had been so blessed to them could never again be what it had been before. It was hallowed in its every part. The light which had been shed upon it would linger yet, for days and years, after the Sun of Righteousness itself had set. They could never again be what they had been before, they could as soon lose the consciousness of their own existence as the recollection of that Divine Master

who had dwelt with them so long and so familiarly.

But this was only half the truth; He had come into the world from the Father, He had lived as man with man, in the world amongst the children of the world. But He was now to leave the world and go to the Father. Intimate as had been their relations with Him on earth, yet those relations were to cease and to merge into one still higher. He was to leave the world, and be with the Father: He was to be to them what He was to all mankind, to all mankind what He was to them—the Light, the Life of all; no longer in the flesh, but in the spirit; no longer the Man of Sorrows, but the brightness of that glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

It is this twofold truth concerning our Lord which formed, if one may so say, the whole character of the Apostles and of Christianity itself. On the one hand the historical and local presence of Christ converted them from fishermen into Apostles, and wrote on their hearts those traits of love and wisdom which are recorded in the Gospels, and which inspire

the Epistles. But on the other hand it was only when this earthly intercourse was exchanged for a higher and more universal Presence, that their minds were raised above any mere local or outward superstition concerning Him; "thenceforth" (to use the strong expression of S. Paul) "they knew Him no more after the flesh;" He had passed into the heavenly places where He sits at the right hand of God, and their life was hidden with Him in God.

II. Such is the most general truth conveyed by these words, especially appropriate at this season when we commemorate the Resurrection and Ascension of the same Jesus Christ our Lord. But the words admit also of more special applications of divers kinds. (1.) We learn what our relation to the world should be, and what it should not be. That world in which He lived and moved, and every relation of which He sanctified by His presence, is not to be despised or neglected by us:—

"Even the lifeless stone is dear
For thought of Him who once lay here:
And the base world, now Christ hath died,
Ennobled is and glorified."

Yet our citizenship is not here. We, like Him whose name we bear, must leave the world and go to the Father; it is our duty and our privilege to live as in that thought, and they who keep that thought steadily before them will have, like the Apostles, the best support in all the trials, the changes, the excitements, of this mortal life. They who so use the world as not abusing it will have that blessing of freedom from care and anxiety, which, as has been truly said, is the portion of those only who can see Time in Eternity, and Eternity in Time; who can feel, on the one hand, that Time and the things of Time are not rendered worthless by the vast prospect which encompasses them, but who can feel, on the other hand, how the consciousness of that prospect alone gives them their true value.

(2.) Another reflection which our Lord's words suggest is with regard to that especial kind of trial which the Apostles were about to undergo, the loss of those most near and dear to us. What they were to feel in the highest possible degree, that all, sooner or later, must in some measure experience, in the separation,

by death or by absence, from those to whom we most earnestly cling for support and love in this mortal life. The lesson is still in its measure the same. We have had them with us so long ; let us think of it, not with repining or useless regret, but as so much clear and unalloyed mercy, which having once been ours can never be taken away from us. Yet neither while they are with us, nor when they are removed from us, is this the chief relation in which we stand towards them. A time will come, if it has not already come with many of us, when they too must leave the world, when they too, we trust, will "go to the Father" of Spirits. Whenever this time comes, then again we feel, or ought to feel, the blessing of knowing that the earthly ties which bound us so closely to them are not the whole of their existence or of ours. They have gone to that state where they are like the angels of Heaven, where years and months cease to be counted, where the only bond of communion between us and them, so far as we know anything, is that they are in the presence of Him who is their God and our God, their Father and our Father, in whose light

they and we shall, we trust, see all things clearly, and know as we are known.

(3.) Lastly, there is an application of our Lord's words which to most of us in this place comes with especial force. We are not only in the world into which Christ came, but in the land and in the city which was blessed'd by His presence. The twofold truth of which He speaks is still our best security for using our privilege rightly. "He came from the Father into the world;" He came to these valleys; He climbed these mountains; He died and rose again within this sacred region. Whatever feelings of deep interest are awakened by following the traces of any earthly saint or leader, may and must be lawfully awakened in the highest degree by following the footsteps of the greatest and holiest Presence (to use no higher word) that this earth has ever seen. To check this natural burst of feeling, to close the heart against the indulgence of these its best and purest instincts, is like the complaint of Judas against the waste of the ointment. The common objects of practical beneficence "are with us always;" but the actual recollections of the life and

death of Christ "we have not always." And not only is it a natural instinct, but a great and blessed privilege, to have had the means of figuring to ourselves at least the outward scenes of the events which have formed the daily bread of our religious life ; to have sounded to their depths the meaning of the words of Prophet, Psalmist, Apostle, and of Him who was greater than all ; to have felt a deeper conviction than ever before that He did indeed walk this earth, and breathe this air, and gaze on these everlasting hills. It is a great blessing, and assuredly it will be our own fault if it fails to bear fruit upwards and strike root downwards to our lives' end. "He left the Father and came into the world," and it is a cold or cowardly spirit that would prevent us from seeing, from investigating, from cherishing any outward fact which brings that dwelling amongst us more vividly than heretofore, more faithfully than books or preaching can tell us of it. But there remains for us here, also, the still more important truth, "He has left the world and gone to the Father." It is well to be reminded that the Lord became flesh, and dwelt on this earth of ours ; it is

still better to be reminded that He is not of this earth now, and that He dwells with us not in the flesh but in the spirit. Local associations, questions of sacred topography, scenes of sacred events, however solemn, however interesting, however edifying, are not, and never can be, religion itself. Most emphatically is it true of this place as of the whole world, that "He is not here, He is risen." "He is risen, and has sate down for ever at the right hand of God; far above all principalities and powers," far above all those earthly barriers which divide nation from nation, church from church, city from city, man from man. It is not because He *was here*, but because He *is risen*, that we are Christians. We are Christians, not because He dwelt in Palestine, not because He died at Jerusalem, not because His body was laid in the sepulchre, but because He ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, and opened the kingdom of Heaven to all believers by the power of His spirit and of faith in His name. On this aspect of our Saviour's life beyond any other the Apostles dwelt in their writings; because this alone was common to all nations; this alone

brought all nations equally into communion with Him and with the Father. Not here, not on Mount Gerizim, not in Jerusalem, but in our daily duties wherever they may be, He is now to be found. Whatever doubts may disturb the special scenes of His manifestation here; whatever superstitions may have overclouded the place of His birth, His burial, His resurrection, His ascension; they cannot disturb the deep peace into which He, as at this season, passed away from mortal eyes. Our faith rests on a firmer than any earthly or material rock; our communion with Him will be far deeper and truer in the every-day intercourse of common life on our return to our wonted duties, than in the very midst of the scenes of His labours and His teaching. May God grant that, having traced the course of that earthly manifestation, we may be, not the worse, but the better able in thought and mind thither to ascend where He is gone before us, and with Him continually to dwell, first through His spirit here on earth, then for ever in the times to come.

SERMON V.

GOD'S HOLY HILL.

(PREACHED AT ZERMATT, SEPTEMBER 3, 1854.)

PSALM XV. 1.

*Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle? or
who shall rest upon thy holy hill?*

THIS Psalm is one of those which internal evidence allows us beyond doubt to ascribe to David himself. It expresses the feeling with which he found himself after his many wanderings established on the mountain fastnesses of Jerusalem, with which he looked from the towers of his new capital on Mount Zion, on his subjects gradually congregating within the walls of the Holy City.

His toils were over, his reward was won. The tabernacle of God which had for so many

years been wandering to and fro, first through the deserts of Arabia, and then from place to place during and after its Philistine captivity, was brought to its final resting-place on the rocky heights of Zion. For the first time the unsettled nomadic character which Israel had borne for so many centuries, was completely changed for that of a settled civilised monarchy; the last trace of their Bedouin existence, if I may so say, was laid up in the tent or tabernacle, henceforth to be superseded by a solid and durable temple; and David himself, in so many respects the type and representative of his nation, in this also resembled them, that he too now for the first time laid aside entirely his character of an exiled chief of wanderers and outlaws, and was established as King of all Israel on a throne which seemed as fixed and permanent as the rocky fortress which was now his own.

I. And now what was the feeling which occupied his mind? Twice besides this Psalm, once in the 24th and once in the 101st, the same thought rises upon him: "Who shall dwell 'beside' Thy Tabernacle? who shall rest on

Thy holy 'mountain'?" The answer is remarkable as expressing, in language so clear that a child may understand it, the great doctrine that the only service, the only character which can be thought worthy of such a habitation, is that which conforms itself to the laws of truth, honesty, humility, justice, love. Three thousand years have passed, Jerusalem has fallen, the Jewish monarchy and priesthood and ritual and religion have perished; but the words of David still remain, with hardly an exception, the rule by which all wise and good men would measure the worth and value of men, the greatness and strength of nations.

(1.) Let us go through the Psalm in detail for a few moments to see that it is so. First, the Psalmist lays the utmost stress on the importance of truth. "He that doeth the thing which is right and speaketh the truth from his heart, He that hath used no deceit in his tongue. . . . He that sweareth to his neighbour and disappointeth him not, though it were to his own hindrance." It is the more remarkable, because David was sprung from one of those Oriental nations to whom the

difference of truth and falsehood is so slight that they look on the speaking of truth almost as an unintelligible portent. That he should so dwell upon it is, in the best sense of the word, a proof of his divine inspiration. From the Old Testament this great gift of God passed with renewed force into the New. Our Saviour Himself says, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world;" and out of a new branch of the human race God has raised up, in these latter ages, nations, to which we have the privilege of belonging, to hand on this high grace to other times. May we all be worthy of it!

(2.) Next there is the command to abstain from all needless offence or pain to others. "He that hath done no evil to his neighbour, and hath not slandered his neighbour; he that hath not given his money upon usury, nor taken reward against the innocent." One part only of this description, "He that hath not given his money upon usury," belongs to the special state of the Jewish people at the time, and has now long ceased to be observed. But this is a solitary exception, and its intention is evidently the same as the rest, namely, that

kindness is to be given without hope of reward; it belongs to the general character of tenderness and forbearance, which is the basis of that grace of Love by which all Christian nations ought to be distinguished.

(3.) Lastly, there is the requirement of humility. "He that setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his eyes, and maketh much of them that fear the Lord." In this the first part is differently translated in the Prayer-Book and the Bible version. "He that setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes," expresses directly the need of that humbleness of mind which is the foundation of all true religious feeling, whether Jewish or Christian. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned," expresses that hatred of evil which is the best indication of a sense of the presence of God. But, whatever be the true rendering of this portion of the passage, there is no doubt of the meaning and of the lesson conveyed by the last part, "He that maketh much of them that fear the Lord." He that has no spark of veneration for any human being is indeed very far from God's holy hill; he who has such a veneration, however slight, is indeed on his

way towards that lofty height, though it may be long before he reaches it.

II. My brethren, let us for a moment apply this to our own peculiar circumstances.

(1.) First, let me apply the words in their very simplest sense to our rest here on this day. When we remember how constantly the mountains of Judah and Israel are present to the mind of the ancient Prophets and Psalmists, how exultingly (if one may so say) David dwells on the fact that his capital was situated on the rocky heights of Zion, in the very heart of the mountainous country of Judea, we are not forcing his words from their meaning when we look at them for a moment in connexion with these everlasting mountains, loftier, grander, and nobler than David ever saw or heard of.

I do not wish to speak more seriously than the subject demands. Doubtless we travel, most of us, not for instruction, but for pleasure or health; not for the sake of any serious or important object, rather for the sake of leaving serious objects for a time behind us and seeking that innocent relaxation which the wis-

dom of God and man alike allows to all of us. But still it may not be out of place, from time to time, to ask ourselves how far we are worthy of this pure and innocent enjoyment; how far these great and good works of God are thankfully, cheerfully, kindly, purely enjoyed by us. As we pass under their mighty shadows; as we gaze on their virgin snows; as we delight in the bounding freshness of their streams, or the verdure of their endless forests and pastures, do we, in any sense, feel the incongruity, (to speak of nothing else,) the incongruity of low and sinful acts and words in the presence of Him, whom, more than any other earthly scenes, these gigantic mountains represent to us? Shall we, when we return to our daily duties and homes, work the harder, the more justly, the more thankfully, for what we have enjoyed in our absence? Do we treasure up the health, the pleasure, or (if so be) the instruction we have gained, to cheer us onward on our journey through life, the better, the wiser, and the happier for what God has in His mercy given us? If so, we have indeed rested for some purpose amongst these ancient hills;

they have become to us "holy" as well as beautiful.

(2.) But this brings me to a yet further application of the Psalmist's words which our present state suggests to us. I have said that they were in his mouth the burst of thankful and serious feeling inspired by rest after wandering, by the thought of what characters alone enjoy that rest worthily; and we cannot doubt that with his view of that rest on God's holy mountain there mingled, dimly indeed and indistinctly, but yet consciously and truly, a view of another rest and of a holier mountain beyond this mortal life, when he should behold "God's presence in righteousness and awake up after His likeness, and should be satisfied with it." Such parables of nature, if I may so call them, are frequent in Holy Scripture; they occur readily to all serious minds, as we contemplate the manifold forms in which God has framed the natural no less than the moral world. Who is there who has not been at least for a moment reminded, by these snow-clad peaks glittering in the evening or morning sun, of a brighter and better world than this, of that golden city descending from God out

of heaven, into which there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth? Who is there, however thoughtless, that has not been struck for a moment by the singular analogy of human life to the descent of those mighty streams which we here so often track from their source to their end? The clear and innocent murmur of the infant brook; the furious roar and rush of the youthful torrent; the deep serenity and heavenly hue imparted as it falls in with some better influence than its own; the whole colour of its course again polluted and overclouded by its junction with a less worthy but more headstrong companion; its final character, widening and deepening with the lapse of years, making for itself a way through distant countries, the fertiliser and civiliser of cities and nations, till it is lost in the common grave of all the streams of earth. Or who can have read the wellknown work¹ that first opened these valleys to our view and not been struck by the truth of the still apter comparison in the history of those vast icy forms, the peculiar characteristics of all these regions? "A strange destiny moves them for-

¹ Forbes's Alps, p. 386.

“ward through their conflict with all manner
“of opposing obstacles; although wasting yet
“renewed by an unseen power, evaporating yet
“not consumed, they bear the spoils which they
“have made their own, often unsightly bur-
“dens, often precious ores; then the vital
“springs begin to fail; the great mass stoops
“into an attitude of decrepitude, dropping
“the burdens one by one which it had borne
“so proudly aloft; but from the wreck of its
“members it takes at once a new and disem-
“barrassed form, another, yet the same; a swift
“and noble stream, which leaps rejoicing over
“the obstacles that had hitherto stayed its
“progress, and hastens to a freer existence and
“an union with the boundless and the infinite.”

But of all these comparisons and parables none is more fruitful, none more really susceptible of yielding manifold instruction, than that old but not yet exhausted figure which compares human life to a journey. The uncertainty from day to day of what each day will bring forth, and yet the general security that determination and resolution will at last reach the end at which they aim; the meeting of various travellers in a

common point, not without surprise, through various routes, some by the beaten track, some by passes known only to a few, some alone, some with guidance well or ill chosen — how like to the course of human life, whether of individuals, or of nations, or of churches; how truly each is the counterpart of the other; how many lessons it suggests, if viewed for a moment seriously, of humility, of hope, of wisdom!

Not least curious is that likeness where reality and figure almost blend into one, in the community of interests which all travellers experience. We, whoever we may be, who are here assembled to-day, have all the same object. One purpose alone has brought us to this spot. However little we have other feelings in common, yet, in regard to the ends, temporary and transient as they are, which we are now aiming to accomplish, we can speak, we can think, we act, almost as brothers: those who have never travelled can enter, as we well know, but little into our present interests; those who have travelled at all will enter more; those who have travelled over the same ground will enter most of all. We, wherever

we may afterwards meet, shall at least have one topic in common which will revive old and fresh recollections, scenes gay and grave, which will impart an almost involuntary sympathy whenever we encounter each other in the various paths of life. My brethren, how true is this of the journey of life, if we would but so consider it! We are here, as I said, met together, of opinions, of characters, of pursuits most various; yet, in reality, not merely this journey of a few days or weeks, but our whole journey of life, has difficulties, enjoyments, duties, which should in like manner, make us all feel as brothers. One Rest awaits us all at the end; one Object we all have in view. Across and through all our various thoughts and pursuits runs that one stream of interests and duties of which the Psalmist speaks; Truth and Justice and Humility and Love are ours to gain or to lose alike wherever we are. We may never, we probably shall never, all meet again in this life; but we shall all meet before the great White Throne, we shall all meet under the shadow of God's Holy Hill. May it be ours at last to find that rest there in the heavenly Jerusalem, by those only ways which

David of old and which the Son of David since, have pointed out to the true servants of God, "Whoso doeth these things shall never fall."

NOTE.—I cannot forbear to give the whole passage, of which part was quoted from memory in p. 371. Applicable as it is to all travelling, it is so strikingly appropriate to one kind especially,—the various routes by which Eastern travellers reach Jerusalem,—that only those who have experienced it can judge of the felicity of expression with which, I believe without any such experience, the author has drawn out the image. "Like travellers across a mountain region to a distant city, some have taken as their guides those who seemed authorised to the office, or who set their own claims the highest; some have committed themselves to those whom accident first threw before them: some to the most clamorous and boastful; some to those who promised the smoothest and easiest way: others have yielded to the temptation of being conducted by passes known only to the few. But when once the toils of the journey are engaged in, it is for the most part too late to examine the credentials and qualifications of their guides, or to endeavour to correct an erroneous selection and choice: in the main, the reaching of their final resting-place will depend on each one's skill and perseverance; few will be led so far astray, that their own energy and sense will not enable them to recover a true path; none will be so well guided, that they can delay without risk, or indulge themselves in seductive halting-places. At last, as they approach the city of their rest, the tracks which seemed so devious and

“ wide asunder are seen to converge ; and the wayfarers,
“ emerging from their toils, meet one another, not without
‘ surprise, which is soon swallowed up in cordial greeting
“ at the table of their common Lord.”— *Wilson's Bampton
Lectures*, p. 276.

SERMON VI.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

(PREACHED AT MILAN, 1854, AND IN PART AT MOSCOW IN 1857.)



LUKE X. 29.

Who is my neighbour?

THERE are few congregations where this question may not naturally rise to the heart, if not to the lips ; and assuredly not least to strangers in a land of strangers. “Who is my neighbour?” Who is there beyond our own immediate circle of home or country that has any claims on our sympathy or affection ? To whom do we owe any duty ? From whom can we learn any lessons ? With whom are we in any way bound together in our onward passage through the changes and chances of life ? There are many answers

which might be returned to this question. But there is one true Evangelical answer, which was given to the inquiry when it was put to our Lord and Master. Let us make out His answer as He gave it, and then see how it applies to ourselves. His reply was given us in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Let us first see what is the story which it relates, and, secondly, try to apply it to ourselves.

I. Like all our Saviour's Parables, it was probably suggested, if not by any outward incident, at least by the circumstances of the time and country, possibly, of the very place, in which it was delivered. We are not told by the Evangelist where He was when the lawyer questioned Him ; but immediately afterwards we are told that He entered into the village of Martha and Mary. That village (as we well know) was Bethany. Bethany was the mountain hamlet which stood at the head of that great descent from Jerusalem to Jericho which is the scene of the parable that He now delivered. If, as we may suppose, He was advancing up the road which He so often trod, leading from the deep valley of the Jordan

to the high country of Judea, the country which lay before Him would easily suggest the whole circumstances of the story. It is a steep mountain pass ; descending for nearly 4000 feet ; but, unlike the mountain passes with which we are familiar, it is enlivened by no verdure, it is cheered by no spring of living water. Bethany is the last human habitation before you descend into that deep abyss of bare precipice and rugged mountain. Far below lies the desert plain of the Jordan, broken only by the track of vegetation which follows the course of the river ; and from that desert plain, and behind those rugged rocks, came forth, and have come forth in all times, those savage robbers of the wild Arabian tribes who have made the road from the earliest times known as the Bloody Way. But, unlike many of the waste places of the earth, it was a road which, in spite of its dangers and desolation, at the time of which our Lord spoke, was a necessary thoroughfare between two great and flourishing cities. Jerusalem at the head of the pass, and Jericho at its foot, were both important seats of government, of religion, and of commerce. The

one as the capital of Judea ; the other, as the favourite residence of the Herodian family, and also as one of the chief stations of the Priests and Levites, and as producing in the rich gardens which grew up in the tropical heat of its beautiful oasis some of the chief articles of luxury to the surrounding countries. It was along this road then that a certain man "went down from Jerusalem to Jericho," and it was in the midst of this wilderness that the fate which has there so often befallen the solitary traveller overtook him on his journey. He "fell among thieves," (as we should say "among robbers,") the Arabian robbers of whom I have before spoken, whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them ; who still render it necessary for every pilgrim who passes that way to go with an armed escort, on his road to the Jordan. They overpowered him in a moment ; they stripped off his clothes, as is still their wont ; they beat him cruelly, and they vanished again amidst the desert rocks, leaving him half dead in the glare of the Syrian sun, reflected from the white cliffs of the mountain pass on this side and on that.

The traveller lay helpless and alone. But “by chance” — so our Saviour speaks, and shows that we too need not fear to use those casual expressions by which we describe the lesser events of life without always directly referring to a higher Providence—“by chance,” another traveller came down that long descent, and the hopes of the wounded man would be roused as he saw the advancing figure of one who might be his deliverer, in this hour of his utmost need. It was one of the priestly order from Jerusalem, possibly on his way to join the station of his brethren at Jericho. Far off he must have seen the bleeding sufferer; but, “when he saw him,” he determined not to be delayed on his journey, “he passed by upon the other side,” on the high pathway which skirts the precipice, and disappeared on his way to the distant city. One hope was thus extinguished; but the road, as I have said, was a well-known thoroughfare, and another hope soon revived. From the opposite quarter, so it would seem, from the deep valley below, another traveller wound his way up towards the fatal spot. He, when he was at the place, came and looked on

the wounded man; the sight awakened in him a momentary pity; but he, too, had other business to discharge. He was a Levite, he was on his way to the Holy City. He, too, mounted the high pathway, and passed by on the other side, and was soon lost to view. And now a third traveller was seen approaching, we know not whence he came, or whither he was going; and, if the failing sight of the dying man could enable him to recognise the dress and aspect of the new comer, his reviving hope must have sunk again, for the stranger was a Samaritan, and the Samaritans have no dealings with the Jews, and those who were Jews would not speak or give so much as a cup of cold water to those who were Samaritans. But the Samaritan rode on to the spot; he did not deliberately turn away like the Priest, or start aside at the sight like the Levite, but he came where the sick man was; and "when he saw him" one feeling only rose in his mind—not the thought of his own inconvenience or the danger of delay, but "he had compassion on him." He dismounted, he went up to him, he applied the usual Eastern remedies to the wounds, he

mounted the sick man on his own beast; and, when they reached the inn or caravansarai that breaks the solitude of the long journey, he halted there with him, he attended upon him, and, when on the morrow he went forth on his journey, he commended him to the charge of the host until he came again.

I have thus gone through this well-known story, partly that we may have it completely before us in all its details, partly that we may fully enter into the instruction which is conveyed to us in the simplicity and homeliness of its style. When we see that it arose out of the gravest question which can be asked by any human being, "What shall I do to inherit life?" there is a lesson conveyed to us at once, even without considering the special object it has in view. That a question so momentous should receive its best illustration from an incident so vivid, so natural, so simple as that here selected; that this illustration should so exactly agree with all that we know of the manner, the character, the scenery of the time and place when and where it was uttered, is both a testimony to the truthfulness of the whole narrative where it occurs,

and also a warning to us, that to find a solution to some of the hardest and most perplexing problems of the human mind, we need not go beyond the observations of common sense and daily life. "Say not in thine heart who shall ascend into heaven, or who shall descend into the deep? The word is very nigh thee, even in thy heart and in thy mouth." Common incidents in life, obvious calls on our Christian benevolence, may teach us more about what we should do to inherit eternal life, than many books and many sermons on the difficult questions of religion.

II. But, secondly, this brings me to the more immediate lesson which the story teaches us. How impossible it is to read it without being reminded of the incidents which may occur to any one of us in our passage through the world, whether on our actual travels or on that longer journey, that deep descent, that steep ascent, from Jerusalem to the Jordan, from the Jordan to Jerusalem, in which we are all engaged between our birth and our death! How many are the sufferers who have fallen amongst misfortunes along the

wayside of life ! “ By *chance* ” we come that way ; chance, accident, Providence, call it by what name we will, has thrown them in our way ; we see them from a distance, like the Priest, or we come upon them suddenly like the Levite ; our business, our pleasure, is interrupted by the sight, is troubled by the delay ; what are our feelings, what our actions towards them ? The Priest and the Levite may have had good reasons for hurrying on ; they may have been hastening to services which they could not postpone, to duties which would not allow them to endanger their lives. The Parable blames them not. It leaves us to ask whether we should have done likewise, it leaves us to determine who are most to be admired :— I. They who did as we should all naturally do, they who would not be put out of their way, they who thought it beneath the notice of religious men to do a homely deed of kindness, they who thought it imprudent to mix themselves up with a matter which was no concern of theirs ;—or he who had compassion on the wounded man, he who administered comfort and support, he who broke off his journey, who for the sake

of a stranger did that which kinsmen declined to do. The Priest and Levite are types and likenesses of men as they commonly are ; thinking much of themselves, and little of others ; with much prudence, much foresight, it may be, but with little feeling, little sympathy, little power of self-denial. Let them go on their way. Judge them not harshly. Judge them not more harshly than we should venture to judge ourselves. But let us remember that there is a higher type of character, a better standard of the true Christian traveller than this. The good deed of the Good Samaritan has still a fragrant odour in all the world ; may it be ours, if God throws like opportunities in our paths, to be enabled to share his blessing, and go and do likewise !

But this general lesson of benevolence to the distressed, of attendance on the sick and afflicted, of seizing opportunities of good as eagerly as we are accustomed to seize opportunities of pleasure ; this, though a great lesson of the Parable, is not its only, or even its chief, lesson. The immediate question to which it was an answer was, not "What is my duty to my neighbour?" but

“Who is my neighbour?” And the answer was given not the less precisely for its being given indirectly. The lawyer—that is, as we should call him, the expounder and teacher of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament—he thought doubtless, when he spoke of “loving his neighbour as himself,” that it was enough if he thereby bound himself to love those with whom he agreed, those of his own country, of his own church, of his own persuasion. Nor would it have been a sufficient lesson for him, if the Parable had been so turned, that the act of mercy should have been performed by a good Jew towards an afflicted stranger, even though that stranger were a Samaritan. This is not enough to open the narrow heart or to enlighten the blinded mind; even the most uncharitable are well content to admire and approve even acts of comprehensiveness and toleration, if they are performed by those with whom we ourselves agree. But what we shrink from acknowledging, and what this Parable forced the lawyer, and through him forces us, to acknowledge, is this; that acts of goodness may be done by those from whom we differ; that

even those from whom we differ, even those who like the Samaritan are outcasts and aliens from the outward church of God, and "worship they know not what," may yet be endowed with a higher grace and gifted with nobler gifts than those who like the Priest and Levite "stand day and night in the sanctuary," and "rest in the law, and make a boast of God, and know His will, and approve the things that are more excellent, and have the form of knowledge and of truth." Who as he reads this parable will not feel that he had rather cast his lot with the good Samaritan than with the Priest and Levite? Who will not feel in like manner, as he casts his eye backward over the history of the Church, or as he studies the signs of our own times, that he had far better meet the judgment of his Redeemer, loaded with the errors of many a heretic, than with the sins of many a champion of the true faith?¹

Doubtless this opens a wide question; a question which this is not the time or place to attempt to answer. Yet it is a question which in this Parable our Lord has opened

¹ See Dean Milman's *Latin Christianity*, vol. i. 145.

for us, and which from time to time may well be brought before us, and not least when we are more than usually thrown in the way of customs, of opinions, of feelings, most different from our own, and, as we think, in some respects most erroneous.

“In necessary things unity, in doubtful things liberty, in all things charity.” Such was the rule laid down by a great Father of the ancient Church, who in this very city was by God’s grace first brought to the faith of Christ. It is indeed a general maxim, which each will apply differently for himself. Some will make so many things necessary that there will be no room left for liberty; others so many things doubtful that there will be no room left for unity. Yet there is one part of his saying which none can misinterpret or carry too far: “In all things charity.” In all things, see the best of thy neighbour, and try to imitate it. In all things, see what is good, just, true, and beautiful in others, however firm in thine own opinion, and in thine own faith. Christ did not say that the Jew should cease to be a Jew, and become a Samaritan; that the

Apostles should leave Jerusalem and join Samaria, because there was a good Samaritan : but that the Jew should feel that the Samaritan was his neighbour, and might be his example ; that the Samaritan should feel that Jews might receive his help, although they were his persecutors and his enemies.

May we “go and do likewise;” may we, though firm in attachment to our own faith and church and country, believe that devout hearts may be found before the gorgeous shrines of foreign cathedrals, no less than in the simple ritual of our own churches. May we be enabled to recognise the diversity of God’s gifts in the stern courage of the austere Ambrose, when he closed the gates of his church against the blood-stained hands of Theodosius; as well as in the gentle acts of mercy which have enrolled the name of Carlo Borromeo with the noblest benefactors of suffering humanity. May we be enabled to unite the undaunted firmness of that ancient Father, the loving-kindness of that Italian prelate, with the gifts and blessings which God has bestowed upon us at home, and which we may no more lose than the Priest, the Levite, and the Lawyer, who were enabled

to answer right, and who, if they lived according to their answers, would inherit eternal life.

III. "Who is my neighbour?" The question has received its answer. It is, we have observed, a threefold answer. "Who is thy neighbour?" First, it is the sufferer, wherever, whoever, whatsoever he be. Wherever thou hearest the cry of distress; wherever thou seest any one struck down by the injustice, the oppression, the licentiousness, the selfishness of men; wherever thou seest any one brought across thy path by the chances and changes of life, that is, by the Providence of God, whom it is in thy power to help—he, stranger or enemy though he be,—*he* is thy neighbour.

· And, secondly, it is he that showed mercy.
 · He, whosoever he be, that shows a sense of mercy, of justice, of self-control, of self-denial for the sake of others, he, little as thou mayst think it, he is thy neighbour. Wide *as* are the differences which part men asunder now,—Greek and Latin, Lutheran and Calvinist, heretic or schismatic, nay even heathen or infidel,—these differences are not greater

than those which appeared to each other to part the Jew and Samaritan in the time of Christ. Yet, if such an one show that he has within him the fruit of Christian mercy and love, Christ Himself has told us that he is for the time our neighbour, our model, our teacher. He shows by his deeds, that, though he be divided from us, he is one with Christ; he shows by his deeds, that, though his creed may be wrong, his heart is right; he shows by his deeds, that, though he may have much to learn from us, we have much to learn from him. The more we differ from him, the more erroneous we think his belief, so much the more is his zeal a warning against our apathy; so much the more is his generosity a warning against our closeness; so much the more is his justice or benevolence or energy, or whatsoever his virtue and grace may be, a warning against our indifference or sluggishness or selfishness. Whatever be his other shortcomings, yet in these points he may well instruct us. Many are the "good Samaritans," many are the "wise unjust stewards," whom we meet in our passage through life, in our journeyings to and fro, in the history.

of the past : "good," although "Samaritans"; "Samaritans," although "good";—as those others "wise," though "unjust"; "unjust" often, although "wise." Look at such, and if thou hast ever seen or known any such, then fear not to regard them as near to thee in their Christian deeds, though severed in all else beside. "Go and do likewise." Ceremonies, customs, usages change from country to country, and from age to age. They cannot be imitated, they cannot be adopted. But good and gracious acts of love and of justice and of truth, energy surmounting all difficulties, patience enduring all hardships; these and the like qualities of the good neighbour of the Parable are always near us, can always be repeated, can always be honoured. "Go" on thy journey, "go" on thy business; "go" home, "and *do*" with all thy might whatsoever of good or true in times past or times present, at home or abroad, thou hast seen or heard; "go and do likewise."

Thirdly, our neighbours are our own countrymen. It was a special reproach to the Priest and the Levite, that he whom they had neglected was a Jew like themselves. If

any one ought to have assisted him, if even the Samaritan was bound to assist him, much more ought they of his own race and kindred. It is of no use to talk of being at charity with all mankind, unless we are at charity with those who are nearest to us ; it is of no use to regard all mankind as neighbours, unless we act as neighbours to those who are our neighbours in fact. "Charity begins at home." Those of our own country, our own church, our own kindred, are our next and nearest neighbours. If there is any one place where we are bound to help them and to act for them, it is in a strange land. Whatever else we may be, we are Englishmen ; we are Englishmen in a land of strangers. If there be any countryman here who needs thy help ; if there be any who has helped thee ; then to him "go and do likewise." But not abroad only. At home, no less, may the truths which thou hast learned here follow thee there, and make thee, to those who are thy neighbours in deed, a neighbour both in letter and in spirit.

THE BODY AND THE MEMBERS.

SERMON

PREACHED IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

OCTOBER 3, 1857

ON OCCASION OF THE VISITATION OF THE CHAPTER BY

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.



TO JOHN BIRD
LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

This Sermon is Dedicated,

BY HIS GRACE'S PERMISSION,

AS A RESPECTFUL TOKEN OF GRATITUDE AND ESTEEM.



THE BODY AND THE MEMBERS.



1 COR. XII. 14. 17. 21. 26.

*The body is not one member, but many. . . .
 If the whole body were an eye, where were the
 hearing? If the whole were hearing, where
 were the smelling? . . . The eye cannot say
 unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor
 again, the head to the feet, I have no need
 of you. . . . Whether one member suffer, all
 the members suffer with it; or one member be
 honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*

IN the Lessons for the Sunday of this week,
 and in the Epistle for the Sunday of next
 week¹, the Apostle calls to our remembrance

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 3—31; Eph. iv. 1—6.

two relations under which all human society, and especially all Christian society, is to be regarded,—a living family, and a living body. “Our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family, of whom every family in heaven and earth is named.” “One body and one spirit.” The words of the text unfold the principle on which such a family, such a body, with the manifold diversities of necessity involved in their constitution, is to be held together, strengthened, edified.

The doctrine thus put forth is not one which commends itself immediately to our uninformed or unenlightened reason. Our natural childish thought is that all good must be of the same kind ; that every good object must be accomplished by the same means ; that every deviation from that which we ourselves acknowledge to be good and useful must be evil or useless. The doctrine announced by the Apostle is exactly the opposite. By various arguments and analogies, human and divine, he urges upon us that God’s gifts are characterised, not by their likeness, but by their diversity ; that God’s purposes are accomplished, not in one way only, but in many ; that if all

attempts at usefulness were cast in the same mould, the result would be, if not positively evil, at least very far below the highest good. It is a principle which, as I have said, is, like most other high Evangelical truths, distasteful to the foolishness of the natural man. The pride of our carnal hearts struggles against its reception. It requires all the light which revelation and experience can give, to secure our acknowledgement of its truth. But, though not agreeable to our selfish narrow conceptions, it is nevertheless not only true, but is a maxim of which the truth is more and more applicable in proportion to the fuller development and growth of men, of nations, and of churches. To the child, to the barbarian, sameness of design may be identified with excellence; the strong hand and fleet foot may supersede all other distinctions to them; all characters, institutions, even all outward forms and features, are alike unvarying, simple, and monotonous. But it is far otherwise to the civilised Christian man; it is far otherwise with churches and societies, such as those with whom in our stage of the world's existence we have to deal; it is far

otherwise with institutions such as that which we are this day called to consider.

Suffer me to enlarge on this Apostolical maxim, both in its more general, and its more special applications. Each application will help us to understand all other applications; each will rivet more firmly the general truth of which every individual application is not only an instance but a confirmation.

1. Take first the simplest case, — that of which, in reference to the Epistle of this week, I first spoke — a family. It has been truly observed¹, that a family, the most natural, the most necessary example of union, can hardly fail to consist, not of like, but of different elements. We cannot choose our parents, our brothers, our sisters, by their agreement in opinion, or their similarity of disposition, with us; they are made for us; we are bound to obey, to cherish, to bear with them, to make the best of them, whether they are such as we would have chosen for ourselves or not. And yet more, it has been further observed, that a family is only complete in proportion as it is thus made up of diversi-

¹ Robertson's Sermons, vol. iii. 146.

ties. A household without children, without brethren, without sisters, can hardly be called a family. And along with these different parts, there must be other differences also. The love of a brother to a sister is entirely unlike that of a son towards a parent: the love of husband and wife is wholly unlike that of children towards each other. And as the relations of the different members of the family towards each other are unlike, so also, in any household worthy of the name, are their characters. There is a likeness, no doubt, — a family likeness, as we say, — which binds them all together. But there is also a succession of contrasts. The masculine character is opposed to the feminine, the strength of the father to the tenderness of the mother, the various professions of the sons, the various incidents which befall each in their course through life. These produce, within the circle of the closest of all unions, the existence of diversities which, but for that union, we should have thought almost irreconcilable; which, through and in that union, make up more than half of the interest, the instruction, the blessedness of human existence. The differ-

ence of the characters of each gives life and activity to the whole; the common origin, the one purpose, the one body, the one spirit, controls, and holds together the parts.

2. Or pass from this to a wider view. Look not merely at the family of a single household, but at the great family of Christendom.¹ Look across the map of Europe, from the shores of the Atlantic to the banks of the Volga, and ask which of all the races, kindreds, and peoples, that fill that chequered space, could be spared from the place which they occupy. And if, as the question is thus put, it might seem that this or that nation or Church would be well rid of from the face of the earth, ask yet again whether this be indeed so. Think of what has been accomplished by this or that church or nation for the good of Christendom in times past; think of what it may yet, in God's providence, accomplish in the possible future; and we shall well be disposed to believe, that, however great its errors in belief, or its short-comings in practice, there is not one member of the European household that we can safely spare. The

¹ The sermon was preached immediately after a return from a journey to Sweden and Russia.

lively energy of one, the noble chivalry of another, the free inquiry of a third, the common sense or austere reasonings of a fourth, the boundless activity of the West, the artistic devotion of the South, the stubborn and simple belief of the North, the immovable fidelity and tenacity of the East; which of these can we safely dispense with? If Christendom "were all seeing, where were the hearing?" If the sinews and bones were all, where would be the smelling nostrils, and the beating heart? No: let us believe that even in this widest sense we are one body and one spirit; that each member of the great community "supplieth that which the other lacks;" that, "if one member suffer, all the other members suffer with it." The losses, the sufferings of one — so in a remarkable manner we may discern in the universal sympathy with our own national¹ calamity — are felt through the whole civilised world: the true honour of each sustains and keeps alive the honour and the welfare of all.

3. Not less true is the Apostle's maxim when we turn from the consideration of the

¹ The Indian mutiny.

Church at large to the consideration of our own Church and commonwealth at home. It is the result of our peculiar history and situation, that in a certain sense we constitute a world, a Church, a family by ourselves ; a mirror of that greater world and Church of which I have just spoken ; a mirror of every complete family and household, as in other respects so in this ; that we exhibit the diversity, the contradiction, — but yet, if we so will, the unity,— of the gifts, which have been thrown together and bound together within the narrow limits of our little island. “Two nations are in thy womb” may truly be said of the Church and State of England ; two principles, intersected, interlaced, entangled, multiplied, divided, united, under every form of diversity and combination, yet all bearing more or less the stamp of our national and religious character. Shall we say that any of these opposing tendencies can be safely trampled under foot ? Shall we say, even looking at the divisions which pervade the whole community, that their extinction would be an unmixed good ? Will even the most energetic champions of our own Church refuse to acknowledge the new impulse given

by the sects which, in the last century, rose to meet the wants that we were then unable or slow to remedy? Will even the most determined of those who have separated from us deny the enlarged measure of stability, of toleration, which is secured to the whole country, and therefore to themselves, by the existence of an ancient national Church, independent of all the lesser rivalries which in lesser communities are almost sure to be engendered? And still more, if we look to our own internal state, who will venture to say that any of the main elements of our formularies, of our ministrations, of our constitution, could be cast out from us without injury to those which remain? We acknowledge the importance of such a balance, of such an equipoise, in matters political. Can we say that it is less important in the far more subtle ramifications of theological and ecclesiastical controversy? That forbearance which is a virtue in the State cannot be a sin in the Church. There are not two codes of morality; one for secular, one for spiritual, consciences. We cannot leave to men of the world the practice of a

high Christian duty, the realisation of a high Christian grace, as though we were unable to attain to the same degree of perfection as they.

Who will not, if he looks within the range of his own experience, acknowledge the mutual edification, the wholesome self-control, the encouragement of graces opposite to our own, which have been the result of different characters, opinions, views, intentions, thus brought together within the pale of our common Church? Who will not, as he meditates on these things, shrink, as did the heathen conqueror of former times even in the moment of triumph, from the thought, even if it were possible, of extinguishing one of the eyes of our common country? Who would not rather rejoice, that, like the living creatures in the Apocalypse, we were "*full* of eyes before and behind;" eyes to see into the many-sided aspects of the whole counsel of God; eyes to see, hands to grasp, and wings of many colours to enfold and "comprehend with all saints," not the depth only, not the height only, not the length only, not the breadth only, but the breadth and the length and

the depth and the height of all the fulness of God, in the manifold riches of Christ Jesus our Lord.

4. But the Apostle's comparison is still more closely applicable to the institutions of which the Church, our own Church, is composed, and of which our own body forms one remarkable instance. There are some who regard the only form in which the Church can work as that of practical activity, constant ministrations from house to house, close intercourse with the suffering, the ignorant, the erring, the corrupted classes of the community in which our lot is cast. Most blessed indeed is that work; most blessed to him who ministers, and to those who are ministered to. Woe to that Church, woe to that country, in which it is not the first, the direct object of all ecclesiastical organisation! But though the best and chief, it is not the only object which the Church ought to bear in mind. Nor is it the only object at which its existing institutions aim. We have our thousands of well-ordered parishes, God be praised! But we have also, God be praised no less! our flourishing schools, and our famous

universities. We have also, God be praised yet again! our ancient and glorious Cathedrals. Each of these is wholly unlike to the other, as unlike as father to mother, as brother to sister, as unlike as eye to ear, as hand to foot. Shall we therefore say that all must be merged together in one, that there is no place for each in the vast economy of the spiritual household? Shall every parish be turned into a school or a college? Or shall our colleges and our universities be dissolved, that they may minister to the crying needs of our neglected populations? Or shall every cathedral, with all its various ministrations, be transformed into an ordinary parish church? Or shall we not rather say with the Apostle: "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head unto the feet, I have no need of you."

So it is. If we are but true to ourselves, there is room enough and to spare for all of us. Each institution has its work to perform. Let none despise the other. Let none

despise itself. Great is the need of parochial energy ; great also is the need of academical and scholastic instruction : but great also is the need for those many offices of worship, of administration, of reward, of dignity, of learning, of repose, which our Cathedrals are intended to furnish ; which, if not furnished by them, are assuredly furnished no where else ; which, if lost in them, can assuredly never be recalled.

5. And here another application of the Apostolical maxim breaks in upon us, as we look round on this congregation, composed, not of one order only, but of all classes of men. If our Church, if our institutions, if our Cathedrals are ever to fulfil their high purposes, it must be by the joint interest and cooperation, not only of those who minister in them, but those to whom they minister. The Church is nothing without the people. The gifts of the clergy need the constant support, correction, control, supplied by the gifts of the laity. “ If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body ; *is* it therefore not of the body ? And if the ear shall say, “ because I am not the eye, I am not of the

“ body; *is* it therefore not of the body ?” Even so with regard to each institution of the Church. To render this great Cathedral what it should be, our fellow-citizens, our fellow-churchmen, our fellow-countrymen, must feel that it is theirs as well as ours. Think what this place would lose, think what this country would lose, if this sacred edifice were swept away from amongst us ; if that which has been done in other countries had been done in our own ; if only a few broken stones marked the place where once Canterbury Cathedral had stood. Think how many are the recollections, and thoughts of all kinds, from childhood upwards, which would perish with the sight of this building ; and remember that on your right use, on your right appreciation, on your right estimate of all that these walls and precincts contain, must our hopes of future usefulness for this or any like institution in great degree depend.

6. On you, my fellow-citizens, and *on ourselves*. For we must apply the Apostle’s principle closer still, not merely to the institution itself, but to ourselves, assembled on this day, as members of that institution. Every Cathedral partakes of that complexity, of that in-

definiteness, of that diversity, which characterises the Church of which it is a part. Even as this vast building is not of one age or one hand or one design, but many ages, many portions, many designs, blended harmoniously into one; tower and crypt, nave and choir, cloister and chapel, tombs and thrones, precinct within precinct, church within church;—so also are we, under our metropolitan head, one body with many members, one family of many sons; brought together, not by our own choice, not by our own predilections, not by our own similarity of tastes or opinions or pursuits or age; but from diverse quarters, with diverse gifts, with diverse opportunities, in diverse stations, in various degrees. As members of the same body, we must work together; steady hand and active foot, and seeing eye and attentive ear. As children of the same family, we must still gather round the same family hearth; as children returning after long absence, each with our several tales to tell, each with our several gifts to offer for the common good, each with our affections renewed towards our common home; each willing to help and to be helped, to bear and to forbear, to give

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and to forgive, to live and to let live ; “ endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.”

7. If at all times this should be present with us, how much more on an occasion like the present, where the unity and the diversity of our constitution is brought before us in that impressive scene in which we are about to bear a part. To those who have witnessed it often before, to those who now witness it for the first time, it recalls, as no other outward occasion can recall, the greatness, the antiquity, the variety, the identity of our body. When from the lowest to the highest, when from the youngest to the oldest among us, we are convened each by person and by name, as forming responsible and separate parts of the same sacred community, in the venerable presence of one who represents to us our direct connexion with the most ancient, the most august recollections of which our country and our Church can boast ; then, if ever, the peculiar privilege, the peculiar responsibility of each of us is summoned to view. It is surely something to feel that we are still living members of an institution older than the throne of these realms. It is some-

thing to feel that we are servants and ministers, not of some obscure fugitive establishment, for which no one cares or thinks beyond our narrow circle; but of a Cathedral whose name commands respect and interest even in the remotest parts of Europe. It is wholesome to be reminded how its grandeur at once redeems our own insignificance, and rebukes our own shortcomings; how in working under its shadow our own vain and selfish aims are put to shame; how the errors or the sins even of the humblest amongst us bring discredit on the body which we share. Like the heirs of a noble ancestry, we have a lineage which it is ours to hand on with honour or with disgrace to those that come after us. We have an interest and a cause beyond our own to maintain and to advance; we have a debt of gratitude to discharge to the beauty and the nobleness of an edifice, of a history, of a worship, which elevates us even in spite of ourselves, which recurs to us in delightful recollections when we are far away, which soothes and sweetens, even if it does not hallow, the life which is spent within its precincts.

8. And, if it be asked, what practical lesson

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is to be derived to each of us from this consideration, what is the special duty of the members of a Cathedral body like ours, let me reply in words quoted not long since, by a keen observer of the signs of our own and of other times, in answer to this inquiry. Declaiming, as was his wont, against the manifold evils of the age, he was suddenly stopped by his companion with the question, "What, in these dark times, is the duty of a Canon of Canterbury?" He paused for a moment, and then answered in the words of the wise man, "Whatsoever thy hand shall find to do, do it with all thy might." It was an obvious and homely oracle, yet, as applied to ourselves, it has often struck me as full of wisdom beyond what first meets the ear. Our duties are indefinite; this is our danger; this is the very rock on which, if so be, we shall be wrecked. But the duty which under the circumstances is required from each of us, by our conscience, by our country, by our Church, by our God, is that each should do with all his might whatsoever his hand findeth to do. The freedom of choice which is our temptation is also our privilege and blessing, if we use it rightly. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, whatsoever thine eye findeth

“ to see, whatsoever thine ear findeth to hear,—
“ do it, see it, hear it, with all the energy that
“ God giveth thee of body, soul, and spirit.”
Art thou engaged in the worship or in the
care of this sacred place, young or old, in
humble or in higher station? Join in that
worship, care for those buildings, attend on
that service, with all thy might, not as a
mere bystander, not as a mere machine, but
as an active, living, breathing, responsible
minister, in the service of God’s sanctuary.
Art thou engaged as teacher or taught, as
master or scholar, in the studies of this place?
Join in those studies, throw thyself into that
learning, with the strength and the fervour of
those who know that so they are fulfilling
their functions in the ancient household of
which they and we are but as the elder and
the younger brethren. Art thou engaged in
duties elsewhere, intrusted with the charge of
human souls, either near at hand or far away?
Thither also—near at hand or far away—the
shadow of this Cathedral reaches, to encourage,
to stimulate, to sustain, to remind thee of
days gone by, of days yet to come, of duties
still to be accomplished, of hopes still to be
fulfilled. Finally, art thou—are we, any of

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us,—endowed with any one special gift of any kind; whatsoever it be, administration, government, taste, knowledge, study, exhortation, consolation, admonition, guidance; be it of the foot that moves, of the hand that works, of the eye that sees, of the tongue that speaks, of the ear that hears, of the head that thinks, of the heart that feels; whatever that gift be, use it without grudging, use it with all thy might; use it—let us use it—not as thine or mine, but as ours, as Christ's, as God's; use it to the honour of this Cathedral Church, use it to the good of this city and of this congregation, use it for the well-being of our common Church and country, and to the glory of Almighty God; and in so doing, and so only, we shall save ourselves and others; then and then only, “if an unbeliever or an unlearned man come in, he will confess that God is in us of a truth;” “God the Father of us all, above us all, and in us all, and through us all.”

THE END.

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